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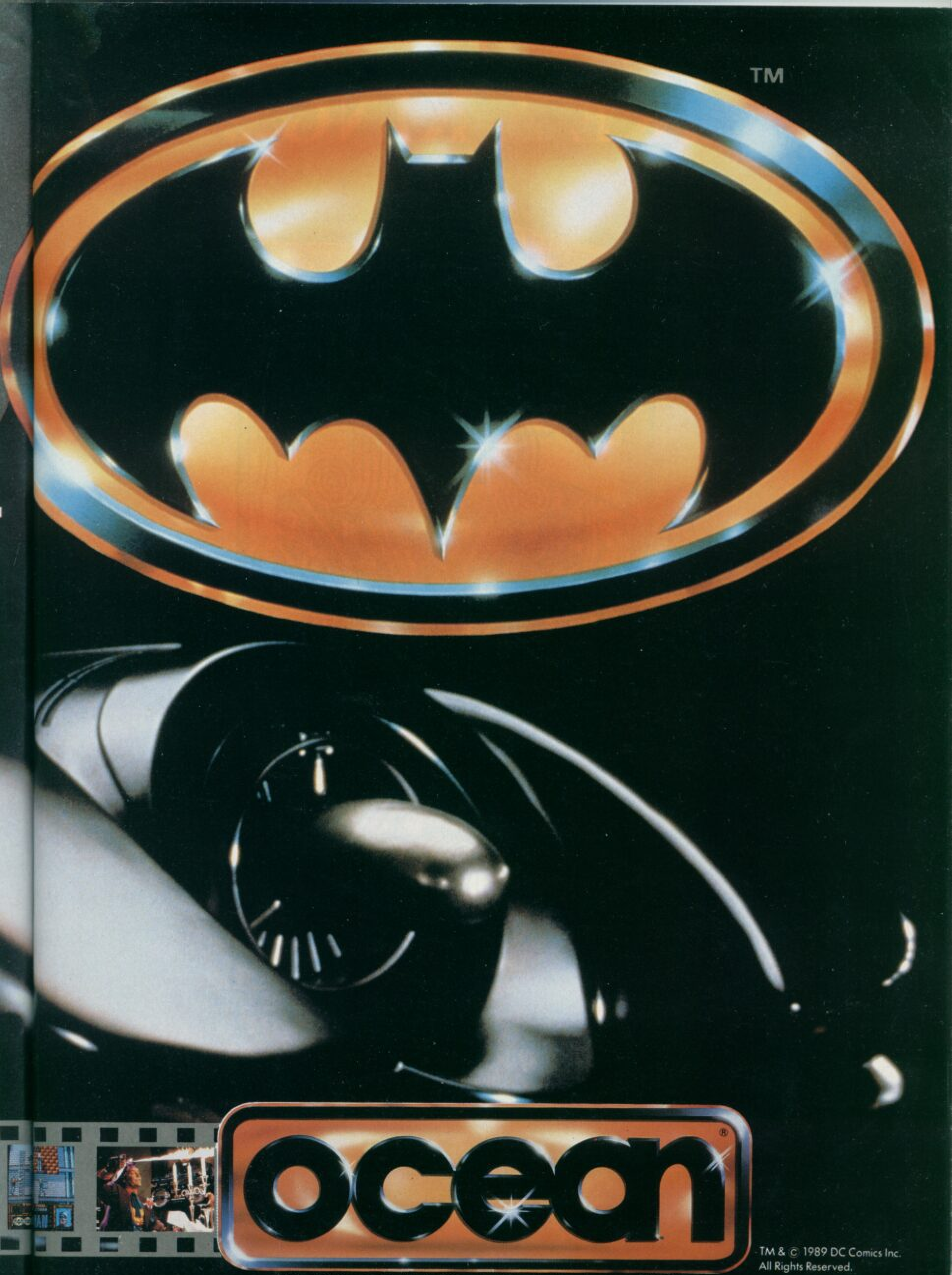
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- FUTURE WARS
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ZERO 1

Zero hour has finally arrived with the first issue of ZERO - the brand new magazine for you, the 16-bit and consoles games player. Apart from a really stylish magazine packed with reviews, previews, competitions, hints and tips, we've got two amazing full price games on the cover for free (i.e. rather a 'bargain price'). You won't find these games anywhere else - only with ZERO.

Oh, and ZERO is *your* magazine so if there's anything you particularly like (or hate!) or anything else you'd like to see in it, write in and let us know. Now, hurry up and blinking well read on.....



GAMES LIST

Want to locate a review or a preview fast? Every one is listed here in our ZERO quick reference guide.

REVIEWS

PREVIEWS

ZERO

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MICROPROSE TAKES OVER THE WORLD

There's been many a yarn told in the games biz about Microprose's Yankie-Biggles, spitoon-hillbilly, straw-chewing High Chaperal MD, 'Wild' Bill Stealey. Intrepid as the ZERO staff are (hem) we decided to interview the Big Willy himself, down in tumble-weed cactus land. After a few 'accidental' turnings to Disney Land, Beverly Hills, and the Whitehouse, we managed to exchange a few topical words with him as he wing-walked on a WWII US fighter at about 28,000 feet.

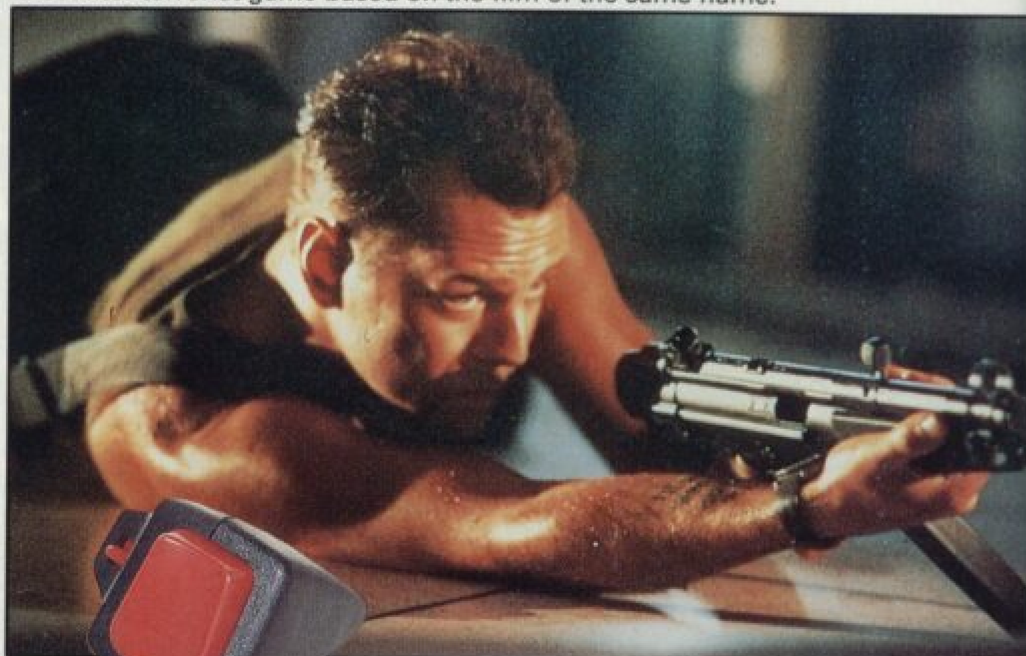


T'zer goes for a 'spin' with 'Wild' Bill Stealey

"Er, Bill," we exclaimed (as the plane and our stomachs whipped into a loop-de-loop). "Whaaaaa... Whaaaaaa... What's your – aaaaaahhh hhhh," (plane and lunch spirals downwards) "What's

TONGUE SARNIE

Activision is about to release a handful of American titles, most intruiging of which is *Tongue Of The Fatman* which involves a wrestler whose stomach opens to reveal a deadly tongue. More violent, if less grotesque, are the deadly machines in *Mechwarrior* which includes advanced three dimensional solid-fill graphics. This effect is also included in *Death Track*, a racing simulation complete with a working rear view mirror and a high tech dashboard. Bruce Willis fans will be most interested in the release of *Die Hard* a counter terrorist game based on the film of the same name.



COP A LOAD OF THIS!

OCEAN IS HOPING TO FOLLOW UP THE SUCCESS OF *ROBOCOP* WITH *ROBOCOP II* FOR WHICH THEY RECENTLY ACQUIRED THE CONTRACT.



NOW YOU SEE ME...

ZERO points awarded to De Gale Marketing and its lame excuse for the sudden disappearance of the Quickjoy range of joysticks last month. Could it be to do with certain Spectravideo legal beagles getting heavy over the fact that some Quickjoy models look a bit like the Quickshot? And the name? Well chalk and cheese certainly doesn't spring to mind that quickly. No, the Quickjoy sticks have been taken off the market because of 'civil unrest' in China, where the sticks are made. Yes, and the ST can double as a coffee machine.

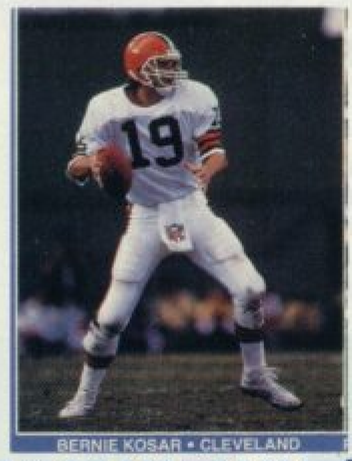
OOPS! Apologies to Silica Shop for a rather large cock-up we made in the pilot issue of ZERO. In that wonderful competition with three Amigas and ST's up for grabs we said that SDL were giving them away. In actual fact the extremely generous company was actually Silica Shop. Thanks very much lads. And sorry!



your company up to in Blighty these days?"

"Son of a-!" he observed, noting our presence for the first time. "Hell and bury ma head in a calf's rump, boy! Watchya botherin' me all wi' a dang darn fool gazzumpin' questions like 'at afore? And-a why's your all shirt got all those diced carrot all uvver it, musky? Ask the cotton-pickin' limeys what we're all a doing! Dag-nabbit!"

One welcome landing and several emptied bladders later, the Stealey-eyed chap told us that Microprose, MicroStyle, MicroStatus, Firebird and Rainbird labels (Bill won the last two in a lasso/ calf-delivering compo last 'fall') would have spat out no less than 18 dang titles by the end of the year. Shucks! Not only that, but the first ever 'Prose games will be making it over to the Nintendo real soon, via Konami and after weeks of pacing apprehensively down the corridors, and after months of hard labour, Microprose has finally given birth to the long overdue *F-19 Stealth Fighter* arcade machine. Watch out for it early next year!



HUT, HUT, HUT!

Virgin Mastertronic is all into arcades these days and of course the Sega Master-System. However it did tell us that it'll be launching a new range of budget software and, for those of you bored of watching Liverpool win everything in sight, an American import called *Quarterback*.



IT'S THE REAL THING

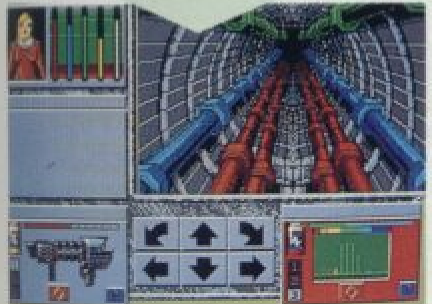
CRL could be back with a bang over the next few months – and that's not just because it has won the oh-so-naughty Playboy licence. It's also gained two more promising licences in the shape of Laurel And Hardy and Coca Cola no less. The Playboy game will be called *Playboy Golf*, the only naughty bits being the caddies that make the legendary Chesty Morgan look like a Norfolk landscape. It should be out next month at £20 on ST, Amiga and PC. *Coca Cola International Athletics*, the decathlon could make it for Christmas, whilst *Laurel And Hardy* will turn up on the Amiga after Christmas. CRL assures us that this last number is a totally new game (nothing to do with the awful Advance effort of a couple of years back) and will feature all sorts of live footage and interactive stuff.

GREEN OR MEAN?

Interceptor has gone green and released *Debut* (ST and Amiga £24.99) in which you attempt to save a planet that has been nearly destroyed by man's ambition and greed.

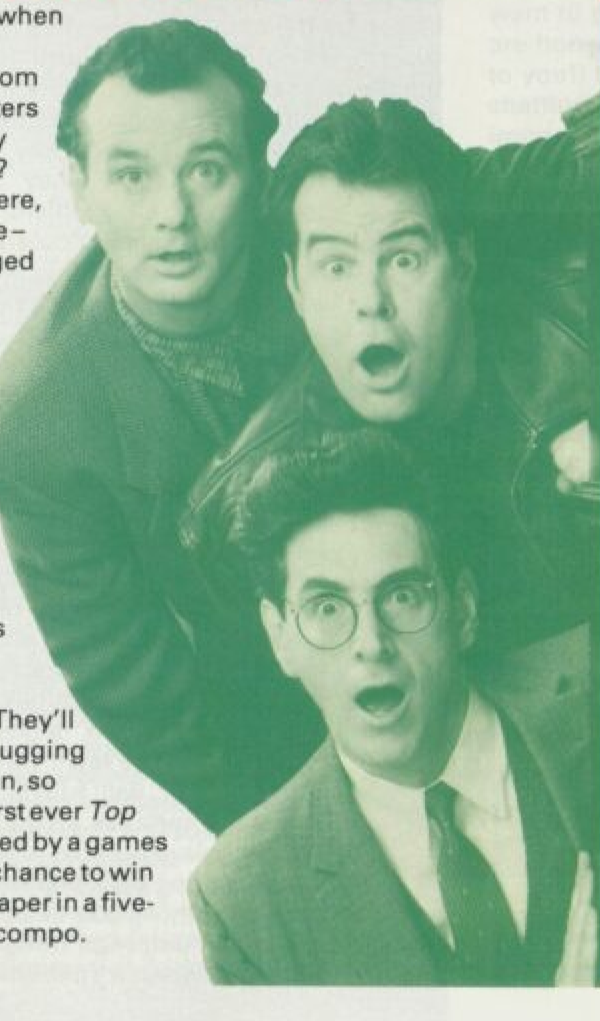
If on the other hand you prefer killing things to saving them then *Outlands* (ST and Amiga £19.95), a vertically scrolling, two player shoot 'em up, might be more your scene.

And if that isn't enough it's also releasing two more games *Xenomorph* (ST and Amiga £24.99), a fantasy role play set in the future, and *The Bloody Kids* (ST and Amiga £14.95) an arcade - cartoon skateboarding adventure.



THEY SLIMED 'EM

Remember when those little Darlings from Code Masters were living pretty close to Starville? Sunday paper there, TV interview here – they even managed to get into Car magazine. Well the image-makers behind all that, Lynne Franks PR, are back, and they've taken on the PR for Sega and three Activision games *Bomber*, *Powerdrift* and *Ghostbusters II*. They'll be doing more plugging than an electrician, so prepare for the first ever *Top Of The Pops* hosted by a games console and the chance to win *Powerdrift* wallpaper in a five-day *Daily Mirror* compo.



ON THE GRAPEVINE

You may know that Michael Baxter is a well known PR person but you probably don't know he's also a female Russian spy. *(That's a lie! Ed)* And did you know that David Ward of Ocean used to run a Roller Disco in Hollywood? *(Er... cut it out. Ed)* And that System 3.5 Litre is releasing a new seal culling game called *Cosh 'Em* where you drive around in three Ferraris bashing the poor little creatures over the bonce so you can re-upholster your Ferrari's ashtray! *(The last statement was completely untrue! Ed)* Don't you believe it. If you want to know what's rumoured to be happening out there in software land then On The Grapevine will be telling you how it is! *(And possibly how it isn't ! Ed)* Consider the beans now spilt...

Mirrorsoft has just grabbed the licence to *Back To The Future II* – should be out in 4000BC. Empire releases *Dr Doom's Revenge* in November, while Titus will be on the *Wild Streets* in late December. Both games will set you back £24.99. *Dragonslayer*, which is due out in January, will set you back somewhat further, £2044.95 to be precise. Okay £44.95.

US Gold has still not finished partying since it managed to lay its hands on the contract for *Turbo OutRun*, which it'll be releasing whenever it feels like it!

Accolade promises some excellent artwork with the release of *Day Of The Viper*. Who cares? It's also bringing out *Blue Angels* the American equivalent of the Red Arrows.

Addictive reckons that its new arcade challenge, *Hyperforce* is so demanding that it's issuing a warm up game, called *Artificial Dreams*, with every Special Limited Edition. If you survive all this then prepare for *Aquanaut* an underwater adventure in the spirit of all those 1940's Sci Fi films. That comes with a warm up program called *Wet Dreams*.

Anyone wanting to get into games marketing could do worse than hang around the offices of Big Apple. The company has ceased trading and is now attempting to sell off its product and licences to third parties.

Cascade/Artronic won't be bothering to buy any old Big Apple licences. It's just obtained the licence for the American game *Universe III*, by Omnitrend. It's taken two and a half years to develop so should be hot stuff. So should Grandslam's *Saint And Greavsie* (a football trivia game) much like the the people themselves.

More hot news-well, fairly lukewarm actually, is the fact that Electrocoin, importers of all those arcade games, will be starting its own label, the first release being *Mr. Do's Wild Ride*. Which strangely isn't about someone's bizzare lavatorial habits.

And finally – *St Dragon* is an arcade conversion not unlike *Silkworm* and should be out next year. And a Mole at Gremlin tells us that it is working on bringing a famous 8-bit character to the 16-bit biggies.

See you next month when we'll have uncovered even more dirty rumours! Have you heard about Microprose's Martin Moth and... *(Snip! Ed)*.

FUTURE WARS

The future's not looking so bright. It's looking positively gloomy in fact. Aliens are invading, bombs have been primed and Stock, Aitken and Waterman are still producing records. *David McCandless* took his time, tried to think of a time gag, failed, and plumped instead for a sneak preview of *Future Wars,* Palace's arcade adventure – a sort of cross between Richard Clayderman and *Doctor Who.*

The game's from Paris-based record company-cum-software programmers Delphine. In fact it just happens to be Richard Clayderman's record label too, and apparently the plush Parisian office has portraits of the frog-prince bursting from every orifice. Yes, we like Richard too. More importantly (probably) is the fact that the record/computer double-act is about to spawn a joyous single of *Future War's* soundtrack - on CD!

The story-line deals with the usual time paradoxes and alien invasions. Sometime in the future some greedy, and no doubt green and salivating, aliens want to colonise the Earth and it seems that we pesky humans are in the way. The alien armada bundles towards our planet, ready for war, but finds itself balked by the amazingly effective SDI system, which blankets the Earth. So the aliens change direction. Quite a drastic change in fact, since they travel back in time to plant bombs at key points in the Earth's history. They choose Medieval, Prehistoric and Futuristic ages. You are unwittingly drawn into this time terrorism and become the only saviour of the Earth.

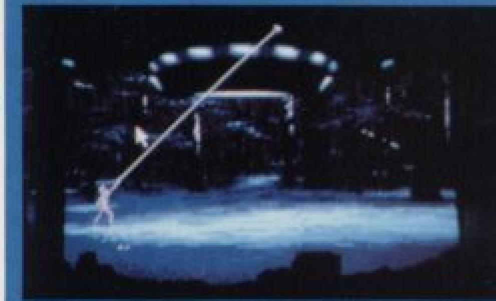
Future Wars adopts the style of the Sierra On Line arcade adventures, with each screen more like a work of art than a set design of blocks as in other 'arcade adventures'.

The real beauty of this type of game is the freedom you're given. You explore every niché of a screen: look behind all the bushes, cross rivers, open doors, operate phones, talk with travellers at a tavern, dance merrily across the lawn with no clothes on... er, well maybe not the last but certainly all the rest!

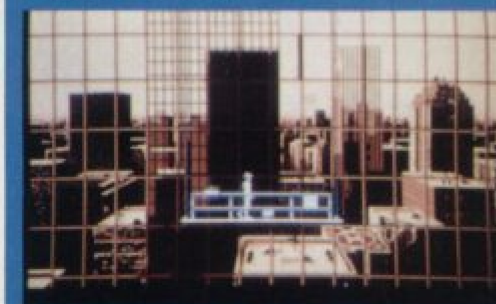
You begin a humble window cleaner, poised on a platform half-way up the glassy facade of a city skyscraper. It's a bit detached from the opening sequence, when a spaceship

DOCTOR WHO?

In the olden days, (before Peter Davidson) when everybody watched *Doctor Who* and used to wet themselves over the cardboard and cling-film monsters and avalanches of polystyrene rocks, everybody loved that word Tardis. "You stupid Tardis!" was the 'in' insult, and "Did the Tardis move for you" was the common post-coital cliché. But did anyone really know that Tardis was actually an abbreviation that stood for Time And Relative Dimensions In Space? (Spook!)



1 The opening sequence is a cross between *Stars Wars* and *Close Encounters*. A massive UFO glides down whilst humans attack it and then systematically disintegrates them, lands — and plop! You're a window cleaner on a skyscraper.



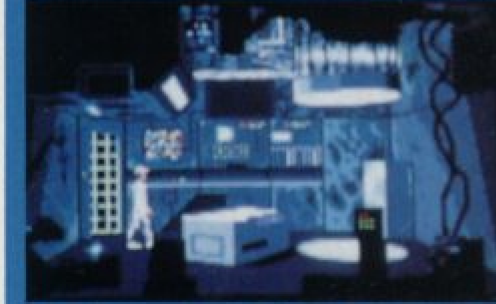
2 Not an alien or a bug-eye in sight. First get through the window at the top of the screen. Your grizzly boss has appeared and given you a volley of verbal abuse. Perhaps you should play some trick on the old fart to get back at him .



4 Once inside, you find that things hide other things, while some things mean nothing, but could mean something if they didn't mean anything I think. (*What? Ed*). A key is secreted under the carpet — what could it unlock? (Spook!)



5 When you examine a relevant object, a blow-up of it pops up on screen. Here you see I've been having quite a nose around, and uncovered a map on the wall, a typewriter and an empty drawer.



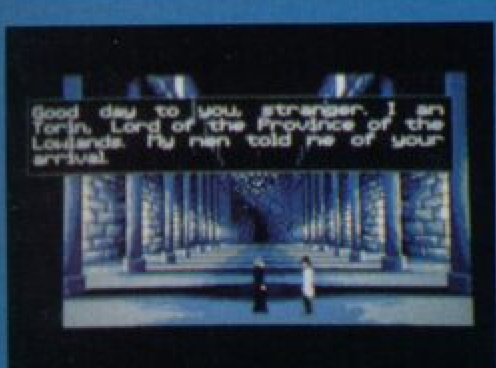
6 After much gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair I've made it into the teleport room. I suspect there are a few things I must manipulate and a few more inneundos I must make.

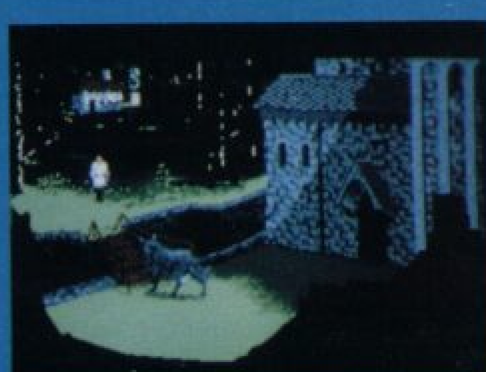


▲ 3 Ah-hah. You examine the scaffolding and discover some buttons. But there might be other objects lurking around. Every nook and cranny of every screen must be systematically explored, since most objects appear completely useless but become infuriatingly invaluable in later levels.

7 Each screen is a work of art — this one especially. A serene lakeside location, dotted with trees and bushes. The lake's surface ripples in the sunlight as flocks of birds wheel about in the distance. I could almost fall asleep here, but I've got taverns to visit, monks to avoid, and wolves to kill (hint). ▼







8 In this wide open hall you meet some old geezer with a beard who's very important to the story. Stay and the pensioner will wax on at great length, finally enlightening you to the story and background and how the kids of today take such liberties. And.. "Oooh! hasn't the price of biscuits gone up? - it was never like this in the war... "

9 Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? Me, I suspect, after seeing the size of this lupine (*Look it up - I had to! Ed*) fur-rug-mother-mega-nasty-dog-face thing (Phew!). If I'm wetting myself just with the thought of approaching the hound and killing it, I'd hate to be inside my underpants when I do get near it.

(scooped straight from *Close Encounters*) descends into a forest, frazzling a few innocent picnickers with some careless laser-beams. But this is *Future Wars*, and in a few locations time you're guaranteed to be zipped back and forth through time like the Doctor's Tardis.

Moving about each screen is a simple case of pointing the mouse on the place you want to go, and your character will wander over. To skirt objects you simply perform a quick series of mouse aerobics.

The right mouse button pops up the interaction menu. A command line appears and you can build up an actions order for your character. The verbs are Examine, Take, Inventory, Use, Operate, and Speak.

To Examine an object you must be standing close to it, or else the increasingly pessimistic computer pulls the old 'You're not close enough' line. The same applies for the Take command, which puts the specified object into your inventory. You can carry an unlimited amount of objects in your inventory, but you'll find that as you solve the puzzles the objects you've used disappear.

The Use command applies to objects in possession, whereas Operate is used to manipulate things like beds, buttons, door knobs and other things with potential for sexual innuendo. When you select the last verb, Speak, you can't actually specify what you want to say. Instead your character just makes polite conversation with any nearby people. Unfortunately, your man is a little short of charisma, and the Speak option can't be used to talk yourself out of a difficult situation (i.e. being faced by a blood-crazed alien ninja and his humming thermo-cannon).

Oral interaction is essential if you want to progress through the game, as are honed aural passages (that's 'ears' to you!) to eavesdrop on other people chatting, enabling you to pick up important clues and info.

Puzzles require both thought and finger power and lots of imagination. For instance, in one situation, the roof is sinking, ready to squish you flat; you have to be quick to type in the security code or else it's pancake time.

The puzzles are HARD. Well 'ard in fact! Mouse positioning is everything, and some solutions can hinge on a few pixels. But that's the challenge, and I think *Future Wars* will keep any gung-ho, hamster-strangling, games Grand Master happy and quiet (and off the hamsters) for months.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Future Wars (Time Travellers)
PUBLISHER	Palace/Delphine
PRICE	£24.95
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	November

ST CHART

1. BLOOD MONEY/Psygnosis
2. POPULOUS PROMISED LANDS/Electronic Arts
3. RED LIGHTNING/SSI
4. STORY SO FAR VOL. 3/Elite
5. NEW ZEALAND STORY/ Ocean
6. PIRATES/Microprose
7. SPACE QUEST 3/Infocom
8. XYBOTS/Domark
9. INDIANA JONES (ARCADE)/ US Gold
10. WEIRD DREAMS/Rainbird



▲ "Ever since I was a young boy ...." Play *Pinball Magic* from Loriciels 'cos it's out on ST for £19.99 and PC and Amiga for £24.99 later this month .



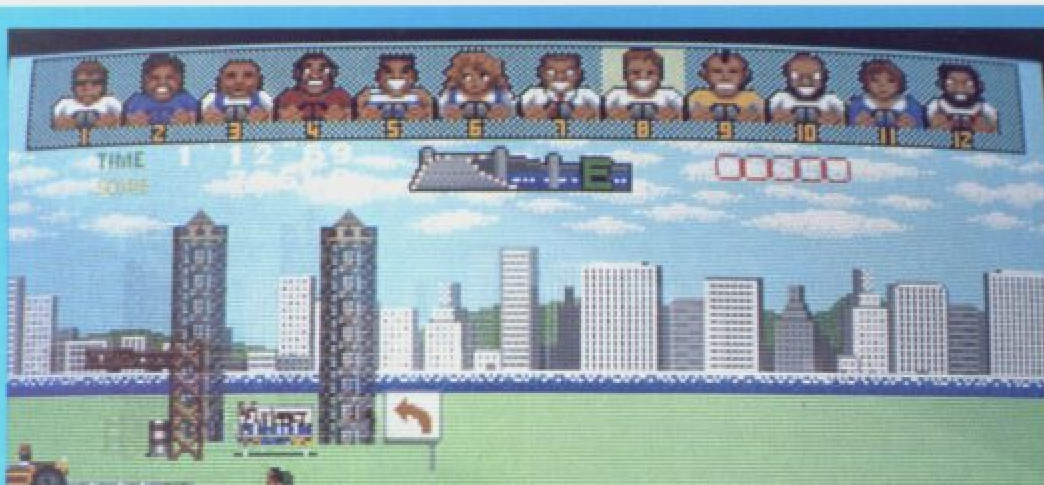
MOONWALKER US Gold

You've seen the film... er.... well no, nor have we, so it can't have been that much of a hit, or maybe we're all just desperately untrendy. But US Gold, where everyone is seriously trendy, liked the film enough to make a game out of it. So with a can of Pepsi in one hand and an oxygen mask in the other let's get off the wall and take a look. First meet Mr Big, he's the baddie and he plans to rule the world (pretty cunning eh?). Just for starters he's kidnapped some of Michael's good friends and Michael is angry, well quite cross anyway.

Now Michael is not just your common or garden pop star. Michael is heavily into... transformation. "So what?" you cry. Well listen we're not talking new noses or permed hair here. No we're talking serious transformations. Thanks to a shooting star our hero can transform himself into a flying car, a silver robot and even a vast spaceship. All very useful, though embarrassing if it happens at the wrong moment "Hello mum I want you to meet Michael... er... Michael has this little problem but its nothing to worry about... honest."

Well it may be a handicap during tea with the in-laws but for fighting Mr Big's evil soldiers, transformation is essential. The final conflict sees Michael in the form of a giant spaceship using a forcefield to reflect the rays from Mr Big's huge laser gun.

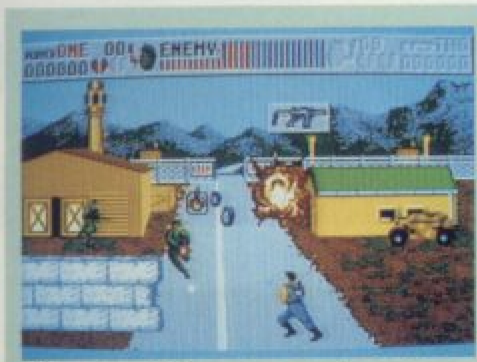
All this makes for some pretty wacky graphics. Combine these with battle and chase sequences and it all sounds like classic games material. Find out just how classic when it's released in December on ST, Amiga and PC — could be a Thriller!



POWERDRIFT Activision

What's the connection between Jason the Skinhead and a Mr T lookalike called Jeronimo? No they don't both work for ZERO, they're two of the twelve drivers competing in *Powerdrift*, one of Activision's Christmas biggies. Ace programmer ZZKJ, has managed to conjur up a brilliant conversion of the coin-op, complete with high speed bends in snow, mud and desert.

Wih a choice of five different courses, made up of 27 circuits, this is not one you're going to be bored of by New Year's Eve. Out on all formats in December. The ST costs £19.99 and the Amiga/PC, £24.99.



This shoot 'em up, coin-op conversion from Ocean has taken Europe by storm and should be hitting the streets this month on ST, Amiga and PC. *Cabal* throws you deep into enemy territory with little more than a single-shot rifle for protection. All you have to do is blast your way through numerous tanks, helicopters and gunships plus a whole army of baddies.

Last Stuntman from CRL is the game that'll let you prove you're tough with a capital uff. With four scenarios to choose from, parachute, bar room brawl, cable car and Zombie Alley (which looks alarmingly like the ZERO office on a Friday evening) the game puts you in a straight contest between yourself and one other guy. Parachuting may sound easy, but not when there are two of you and only one 'chute — losing hurts. Out later this month on the ST and Amiga, price £19.95.
▼



AMIGA CHART

1. BLOODWYCH/Mirrorsoft
2. POPULOUS PROMISED LANDS/Electronic Arts
3. TARGHAN/Gainstar
4. NEW ZEALAND STORY/ Ocean
5. XYBOTS/Domark
6. RVF/Microstyle
7. DUNGEON MASTER/ Imageworks
8. STORY SO FAR VOL. 3/Elite
9. BLOOD MONEY/Psygnosis
10. S.E.U.C.K./Palace



THE UNTOUCHABLES Ocean

This is the latest blockbuster from Ocean - the people who brought you *Batman*. *The Untouchables* will have six exciting arcade-style sections that put you in control of Eliot Ness and his elite squad of Mafia-busters. Each level is taken from a scene in the film, which was set in the Chicago of the '20s, ruled by Al Capone and his mob.

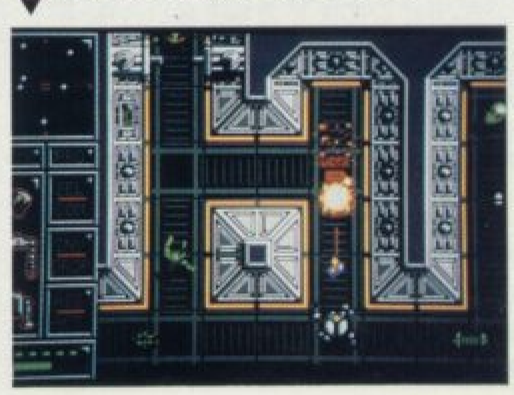
There's the warehouse bust, the border raid, alleyway shoot-outs, the hostage scene, the final rooftop duel, plus the railway station cliffhanger (complete with runaway pram!) You can take on big Al and his gang sometime in November on ST, Amiga and PC.

CONTACT Firebird

***Contact*, an enormous space game, starts with a force of weird and wonderful aliens wiping out the entire crew of your space station. Well that was a nice quick game wasn't it? Oh hang on, the ship-board computer controlled droid is still working, and it's your job to guide it round as it surveys the damage, collects any useful items and fends off the invading hordes.**

As well as out-shooting the aliens you'll be well advised to out think them too. They respond to your actions, so a little thought might save a lot of effort. Of course if thought is too demanding for you, you can always just go in shooting from the hip (or whatever ship-board computers have in place of hips.)

***Contact* is out this month on both the ST and Amiga at £24.99.**
▼



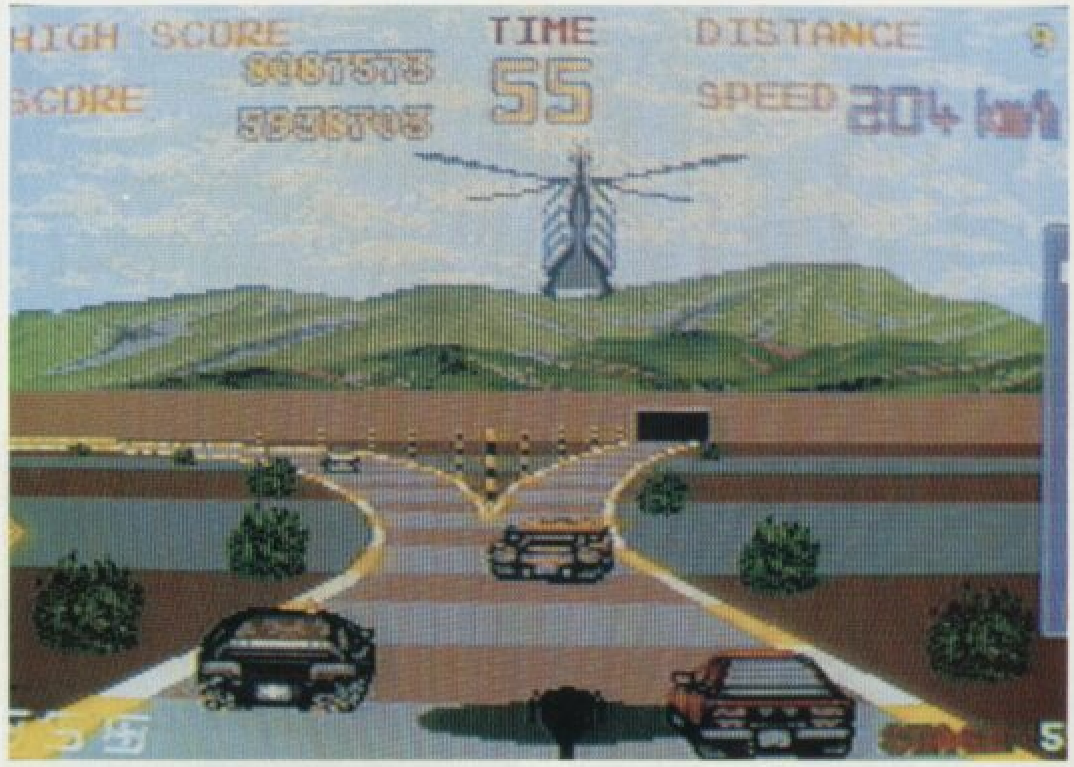


◀ **Combining elements of 720° and *Paperboy*, Gremlin's *Skidz* has you alternating between a skateboard and BMX, zipping round the town collecting money whilst avoiding the grannies, workmen and multitudes of other hazards which litter the roads. It looks good on the ST, but absolutely spiffo on the Amiga, as it uses the full screen area! Due out on all formats in November, and the price? £19.99.**

PC CHART

1. KINGS QUEST/Sierra On Line
2. CHESSMASTER 2100/CP Software
3. OUTRUN/Kixx
4. ROBOCOP/Ocean
5. WATERLOO/PSS
6. RICK DANGEROUS/Firebird
7. LICENCE TO KILL/Domark
8. THE DUEL (TEST DRIVE II)/ Accolade
9. CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS/SSI
10. LEISURE SUIT LARRY II/ Sierra On Line

Charts supplied by the Virgin Computer Games Shop at the Virgin Megastore on Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. Tel. (01) 631 1234



CHASE HQ Ocean

If Nigel Mansell ever decided to become a speed cop, *Chase HQ* could well become his game. In fact it could be one of the most thrilling 3D driving games yet, when it's released on ST and Amiga just in time for Christmas. You and your buddy strap yourselves in a turbo-charged Porsche and go off in pursuit of nasty crims driving a mega range of souped-up motors over five levels.

You'll chase the villains through city streets, across bridges, through tunnels and along dirt-tracks in your bid to ram them off the road. Out soon.

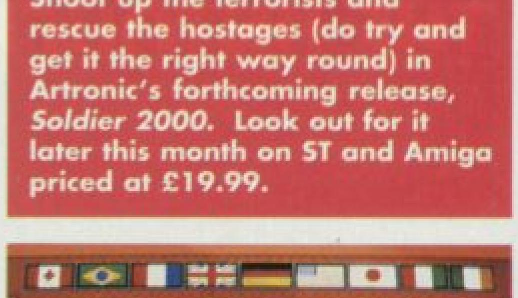


FIGHTING SOCCER Activision

Activision is launching a game called *Fighting Soccer* this month on ST and Amiga at £19.99 and £24.99 respectively. Unfortunately the press release came in Japanese and we only speak Serbo-Croat round here. A quick flick through our copy of *Japanese Made Simple* though revealed that the game will be a multi-player joystick control game in which you can control the length and direction of players shots. The scenario seems to be a World Cup Group, which may explain why we couldn't find England's name amongst the list of competitors.



Shoot up the terrorists and rescue the hostages (do try and get it the right way round) in Artronic's forthcoming release, *Soldier 2000*. Look out for it later this month on ST and Amiga priced at £19.99.



▲ Burn rubber in DMS's *Drivin' Force* which is out at £19.95 on ST and £24.95 on Amiga. Not only can you race but you get loads of vehicles to choose from including jet skis for the yuppies.


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MANCHESTER UNITED Krysalis

"Ere anyone wanna buy a football team? It's in good nick, just needs a little bit of fine tuning. Alright guv I'll come clean, it's Manchester United but I mean yer know good quality's difficult to come by these days."

If you fancy your chances at succeeding where so many others have failed (we give Ferguson about four months) then have a look at Krisalis's *Manchester United The Computer Game.* Designed with the co-operation of the club, the playing area has been produced over fifteen highly detailed screens, keeping the players and pitch true to scale. Your role in all this can be as either manager, star player or aspiring player manager. The manager's section has "animated icons" so you can literally bring tears to his eyes.

The game will 'support' the Konix Multi-System as well as being on all other formats. The Amiga version should be out this month, priced £24.95 and the ST in November for £19.95. But be warned, a glance down United's injury list suggests that it'll soon be signing up all the computer players it can lay its hands on.

With modern athletes pockets often loaded down with more drugs than the average NHS dispensary, players of CRL's *International Athletics* will be relieved to know that they need nothing stronger than a cup of tea to make their bid for gold. Both versions are £19.95.
▼



According to Barry Norman, "Elvira is outstanding... well two bits of her anyway." If you've never heard of Elvira she's the spook host on an American horror film show. She's also starred in her very own horror film called *Elvira - Mistress Of The Dark* and now she's to star in her very own computer game, of the same name, from Horrorsoft. Suffice to say it's a nightmare! It's out on PC, ST and Amiga later this month.
▼



SWITCHBLADE Gremlin

People who like us thought *Rick Dangerous* was 'the biz' will be ecstatic to hear about Gremlin's latest, as it's by the very same programmer! We've seen it up and running, and if anything, it's better than *Rick!!*

***Switchblade* is a super smooth, sonically superior, superbly er....programmed stunner. The idea is to charge round mazes, up and down ladders, battling against the usual collection of meanies as you go, hunting for 16 pieces of a sword. Why? Who cares when the game's this good. It's got tons of hidden sections, and oodles of playability. *Switchblade* will be out in November on ST and Amiga.**





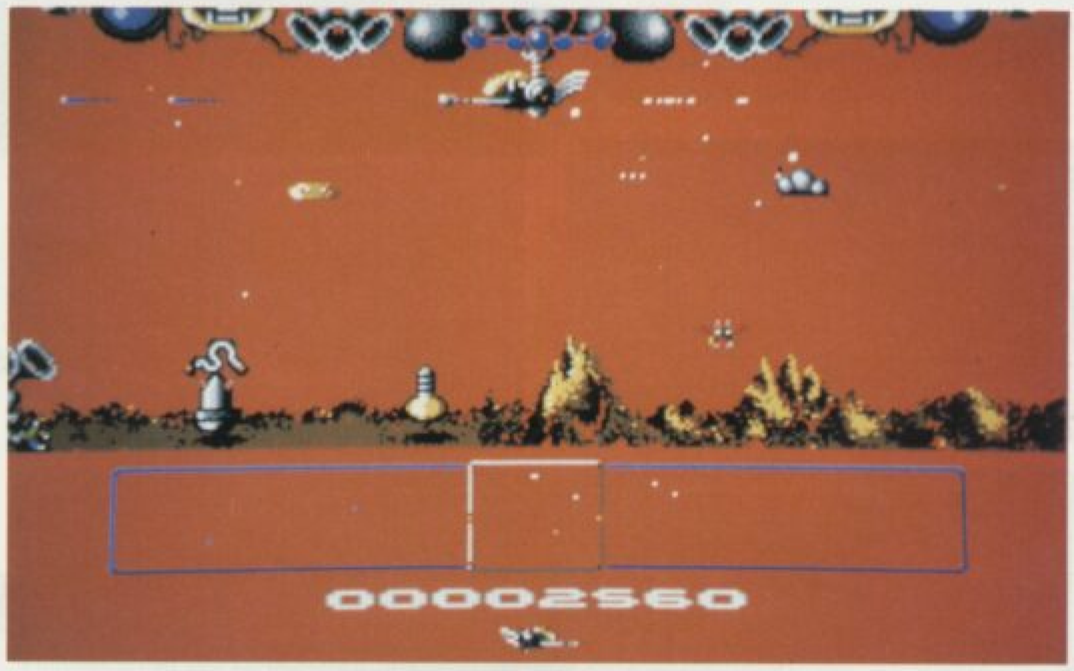
TAKE 'EM OUT Artronic

***Take 'Em Out* Artronic's new arcade game is a rather violent, not to mention addictive shoot out. No brains but a lot of brawn are needed to see you through your S.W.A.T training (target shooting). After that you're on your own and on the streets (people shooting). Terrorists and civilians pop up from behind walls, windows and alleyways. From now on it's simply a case of, if it moves shoot it. And even if it doesn't! It'd be nice if you left a few civilians alive and kicking but then hell what's a few extra casualties? Out in November on ST and Amiga for £19.99!**

TWO SPIFFO GAMES FREE!

You're one shell blast short of the troppo ward (i.e. totally bonkers) if you don't think this is a real bargain. Two completely original full price games and a brand new magazine for £1.50. (Or alternatively, two completely original full price games for £1.50 and a brand new mag for minus £38.50). Whichever way you look at it, it's a blinking 'steal'!

RECOIL



Larvaely! Watch those venom spitting volcanoes - skim past them a little too quickly and you may well loose your knackers!

It's bouncy! It's springy! It's *Recoil*. And it's flippin' brilliant! Thanks to Special FX and programmer Jonathan Smith, we've got a truly amazing ST game on the cover of this, the first

Jonathan's a real pro when it comes to action packed hits– he's programmed a fair few including *Green Beret, Hypersports, Batman, Mikie, Cobra, Terracresta* and *Firefly* on the Spectrum. He's recently started work on the ST and he looks like becoming one of the top programmers on this machine too – his first effort was the blockbuster *Red Heat*. But enough about the programmer. What about the game?

Er... what about it? (*It's amazingly, brilliantly, fantastic. Ed*) Oh yes – it's pretty good actually. There's a cosmic conflict going on... you know the sort of stuff... wars raging across the galaxy, billions dead, billions wounded and even more billions facing destruction. It's a very overcrowded universe .

Everything faces complete obliteration – moons, planets, stars and even Nicholas Parsons!

The evil force that wreaks havoc on the universe is cold blooded, brutal and, worse still, completely random *(So it might not get Nicholas Parsons after all! Ed)*. Amidst this total chaos one man (or woman, or amazing talking parrot with one leg and a speech impediment) fights for the faith and the moral right to exist. Sounds good so far!

Anyway you're that man (or woman, or amazing talking parrot with one leg and a speech impediment) and must battle your way through the cosmic conflict – an individual crusader. As commander of the 'Murderer' Class Systems Superlifter "Kiss My Ass" (*Do what? Ed*) you must protect Diddy David Hamilton otherwise known as EMAR II, a tiny unstable planetoid, home of rare energy crystal – who's powerful properties are much sort after by both sides.

You control the main surface defence gun emplacement which is suspended beneath the Superlifter, a bit like an oversized Zebedee (or shock absorber for all you car mechanics out there!). You pick up energy by collecting the crystals (those things that bounce up and down) and depositing them at the central ground base. Got all that. To put it simply you've got to SHOOT EVERYTHING THAT MOVES – if it doesn't move it's probably a bug!

CONTROLS

JOYSTICK	**Left/Right – Superlifter direction** **Up/Down – Gun turret position** **Fire – Photon release**
KEYS	**Space Bar – Knacka bombs**
LOADING	***Recoil* autoboots so just place it in the ST and switch on.**



Keep your waistline to the same proportions as Jocky Wilson's if you want to survive long enough to collect the gems. Oh, and watch out for the buzzing border!

MERV THE MERCILESS

Courtesy of ZERO (and with a 'little bit' of help from Probe Software) we bring you *Merv The Merciless*, a rather engaging little chain-saw jaunt in Goblin-land for Amiga owners......

Here's the story behind *Merv The Merciless.*

"Merv's a Troll. A particularly annoying git of a Troll, in fact – so he's been banished from the land in which he lives to spend the rest of his days in a place which is less than pleasant. But he can always try to escape, can't he..."

Erm, and that's it. Yes. It wasn't really much of a story, was it? But that's the kind of game this is – downright simple. But, luckily, as well as being downright simple it's also incredibly addictive and blinking hard to finish.

You control Merv. And what you've got to do is walk around collecting things, avoiding other things and making sure that at no time do you touch the four screen borders – because they're made up of chainsaws, and they'll kill you on contact. Avoiding the borders on scrolling games (which is what this is: a four way scroller, viewed from above) is normally simple. You stay in the middle of the screen, and, as you move, the screen moves with you.

Not so in *Merv The Merciless!*

In *Merv The Merciless*, it's the screen that scrolls around on its own. What you have to do is keep up with it (i.e. away from the edges).

In an ideal world, this wouldn't be too hard really. But as you know, this isn't an ideal world (just have a word with a Scottish person about Poll Tax if you want proof). In the land that Merv's been banished to, there are rivers to drown in, mazes to get caught in and land mines to be trodden on. With the continuously random screen scroll it's very easy to panic as the chainsaw blades head for you, making you run into something nasty, and, well, basically you keep on getting killed. Unless of course you are fantastically quick-thinking with the reactions of a cheetah.

As if avoiding the edges of the screen and all the numerous traps wasn't enough to contend with, Merv also has to collect nosh (i.e food) and dosh (i.e. erm, dosh). If he gets enough dosh (diamonds, gold bars, coins etc), he can eventually afford 'the giant chainsaw' which'll enable him to cut himself a hole in the border fence and escape (which means you've finished the game). However, if Merv doesn't get enough nosh (fruit, bacon & eggs etc), you'll see the 'tummy icon' at the top of the screen getting thinner and thinner. If it gets too thin, Merv pops his cork. As if this wasn't enough (*You mean there's more? Ed*), there's a timer (an egg-timer to be exact) 'ticking' away in the top left corner of the screen. You don't want this to run out, so you have to top it up. But to top it up, you have to find the 'top-up icons', which are scattered around – but there aren't very many, so use them wisely.

And that, as they say, is that. Totally simple but well hard. We'll leave you to discover what some of the icons do, but here's a little hint about what happens once you've got the chainsaw – "the timer's got to run out before you can escape!"

So what are you waiting for - go and load it up now. Oh. You have already. Erm, sorry.....

CONTROLS

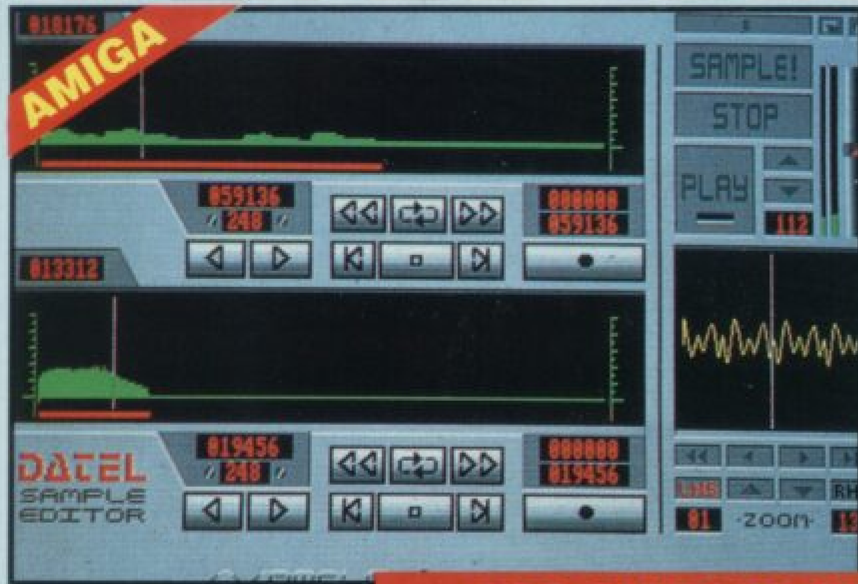
JOYSTICK	**Up and Down, Left and (erm) Right**
LOADING	**1 Switch on Amiga WITHOUT *Merv* in the drive. 2 Wait for 'insert disk icon' to appear and then insert *Merv* disk. *If you have a one megabyte Amiga *Merv* will autoboot automatically.**

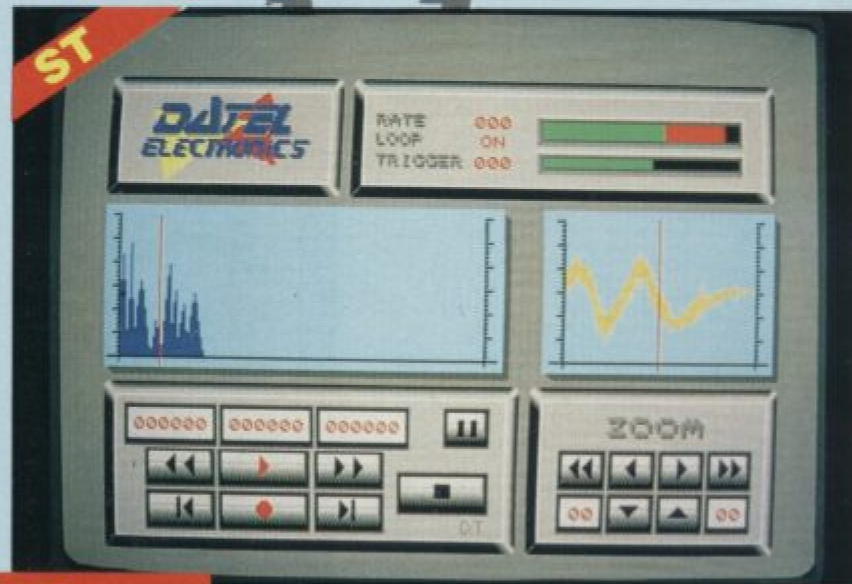
BIRRA BOVVER, GUV?

If you have trouble loading your disk please take the following steps.

1. Make sure you are loading the disk into either an ST or Amiga.
2. Try resetting the machine and reloading.
3. Remove the HP sauce from your disk - which you accidently dropped in your lunch.
4. After several futile attemps to load either* Recoil (ST ONLY) *or Merv The Merciless* (Amiga ONLY) *- give up!
5. Place the disk, with a little note explaining the problem, along with a stamped addressed heavy-duty envelope in a jiffy bag.
6. Send it to ZERO Disk Returns, Interceptor Ltd., Calleva Park Industrial Estate, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW.
7. Go and buy another copy of ZERO so you can play the games while you're waiting for your new disk.
8. Go on a camping holiday in Sweden.

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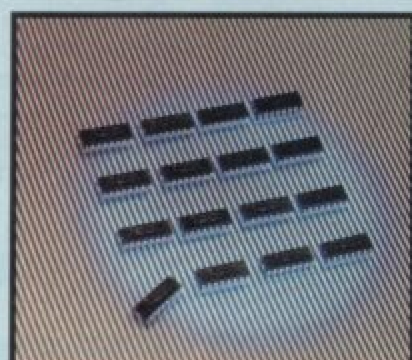
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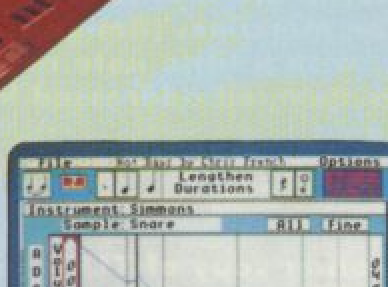
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FLYING TONIC

MARSHALL MELLOW

Digital Integration has finally forayed into the 16-bit market with *F-16 Combat Pilot. David McCandless* found himself dwarfed by height and brain power when he quizzed director Dave Marshall on some of the realities behind "the most realistic flying experience..."



Dave K. Marshall is not a man you'd smugly challenge to a game of *Trivial Pursuit*. About six foot five of pure intellect, Dave (or 'sir' as he let me call him) is one of those guys with lots of those impressive abbreviations after his name. A bachelor of science, a chartered engineer, and a member of the Institute of Electrical Engineering, he's the only person in the country with an A4 business card.

He founded Digital Integration with fellow brainbox, Rod Swift. Their interest in the cerulean world of flight sims led to *Fighter Pilot*, their first release which took to the skies on the Speccy. Since then they've had something of an autocratic rule in the flight sim world, perhaps rivalled only by Microprose. Finally this year Digital ventured into the 16-bit market with its newest and most ambitious release to-date, *F-16 Combat Pilot*, behind which is two-years of research, sweat, toil and more sweat from the five-strong production team.

But you can't just wake up one sunny morning, fry some eggs and then suddenly decide, 'Right I'll write a 16- bit flight simulator today.' Research is everything. So what sort of research went into *F-16*?

"Apart from getting every publication available on the F-16, one of the first things we did was to go down to the flight archives and look at early test flight reports," said Dave.

Simulators are complicated beasts - full of moving shapes, angles, views, algorithms and other weird things. Are there a lot of complicated calculations in *Combat Pilot?*

"Yes, there's a phenomenal amount of maths that just goes into the aircraft modelling. Even the various weapons systems, their maximum range, effective speed and motor burn time all vary with altitude and aircraft configuration."

By now I was experiencing thorough cerebral-inferiority, so I cunningly changed the subject, pretending I'd understood every word that had been said and switched to the game-play aspect. Was it an effort to achieve a balance between reality and gameplay?

"There's certainly a tendency to immerse yourself in reality and neglect playability, so with *F-16* we decided to place as much priority as possible on gameplay as well as technical accuracy."

But surely you can't recreate every facet of a 10 million pound piece of hardware on a 300 quid home computer?

"You have to make certain approximations of course. There's no way you'll crunch through all the partial differentiation equations of a plane at 10 frames per second. But the 'feel' of the game is all important, that's why we use pilots to come in and check it."

The scope for F-16 flight-sims and further conversation on the topic seem exhausted. What direction will DI take now?

"The Harrier is an aircraft I've also been keen to tackle. But we're working on an undulating terrain game. A helicopter or a ground bombing aircraft flies very low, and you get a phenomenal impression of speed at that height.

"We always have open (vastly intelligent) minds. We've had an enormous request for a civil simulator. And we have an idea," David hints secretively, "that would have a very wide appeal without having to carry sidewinders on the wings."

What sort of game DI will launch in the future seems uncertain, and my attempts to coax Mr Marshall into revealing anything failed dismally. But I imagine that whatever game it is, it's sure to be good!



Ready to roll on Digital Integration's *F-16 Combat Pilot*... erm, oh dear, I forgot to go to the toilet.

FIGHTER PILOT MANOEUVRES



The High G Yoyo



The Clever Dick



The Spirograph



The Stupid Bastard

(That's enough manoeuvres! Ed)

ILLUSTRATIONS: DUNCAN MACDONALD

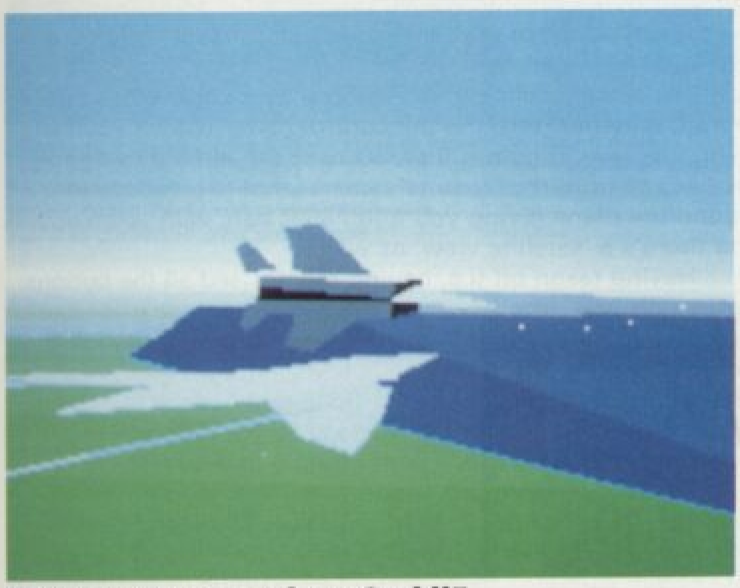
GHT

Can you down two Migs while eating a cheese and pickle sarnie? Can you memorize the functions of an entire keyboardful of buttons? Do you say 'Roger that, over. Copy?" when asked to pass the salt at dinner parties? If you answered 'yes' to the first two then you're obviously a bit of an 'armchair pilot'. If you answered yes to the third then you're obviously a little bit of a dickhead. We got our two resident dickheads (*David McCandless* and *Duncan MacDonald*) to take a look at the rise and rise of the flight simulation.

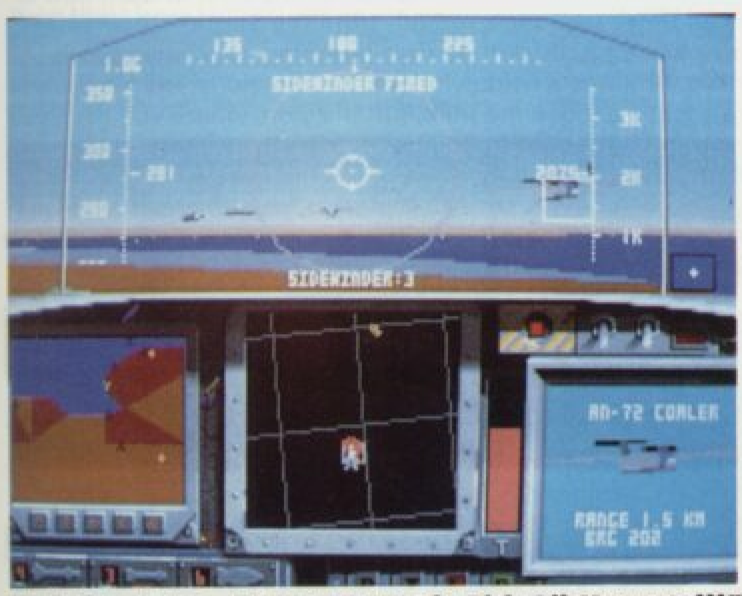
AVIATION CELEBRATION TIME



"Eat lead, Johnny Gaddafi!"



"Eat Agent Orange, Johnny Geek!!"



"Eat sidewinder, Johnny Extremely Rich Oil Magnate!!!"

With the huge number of flight sims on the market we decided it was 'high' time someone fly-tested four of the best.



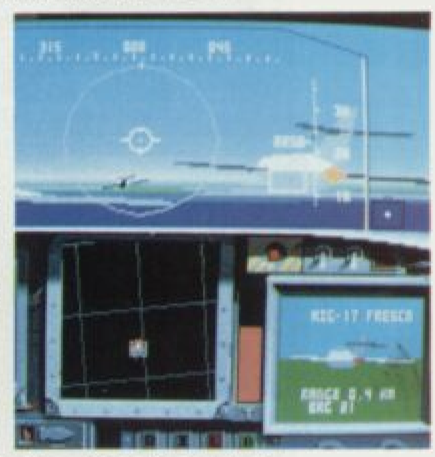
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

Microprose

Macca: The big boys at Microprose think, eat, swallow, sweat and breathe flight sims. Under the watchful eye of 'Wild' Bill Stealey, they've been churning out flight sims for years, decades even. *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is their latest and yes, greatest sim, centred around the famous yank plane.

The missions are centred on real places, namely Libya, Vietnam, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, with both real and (hopefully) hypothetical occurences. The gameplay is basically 'seek and destroy'. Attention to detail is exact with every major hill-top, town, mountain and known SAM (surface-to-air-missile) site painfully positioned to the inch.

A lot of attention has been paid to the cockpit design. All the latest technology that clutters our cockpits today is there. A camera screen zooms and focuses in on your selected target, be it an enemy plane, SAM site or elderly pensioner. The radar display gives you a computer-interpreted view of the surrounding area. The map section shows an ordnance-survey-style map of your targets.



F-15 II is graphically outstanding (especially in VGA mode). The sky and ground is stippled - not restricted to just uniform blue or brown - and they meet in the distance as a hazy horizon. Also, the enemy planes don't just explode á la *Falcon* but disintegrate, showering you with fragments.

Another nice feature was the exterior views. Not as extensive or as complex as *Falcon* admittedly, but the missile view alone (which places a video camera on the end of your missile) makes the game worth playing.

As for hassle I found that controls were slightly bulky, and it was difficult to perform the very subtle (but immensely skillful) movements (features of my flying prowess) without gaining and loosing about 200 feet in altitude. This unwieldiness also makes landing very tricky, since the runways are very short, much like Duncan's wil... (*Snip! Ed*) (I was going to say wildebeest) and you have to prepare your final approach well in advance.

Despite this, *Strike Eagle II* is an excellent simulator, rendered very playable by Microprose's own admission that it "stripped away all the boring elements" of flying. Whether napalming villages in Vietnam rates as 'fun' is debatable, but *Strike Eagle II* is very fast, very challenging and very good.

OVERALL SCORE	89	
ST: COMING SOON	AMIGA: COMING SOON	PC: AVAILABLE NOW

CONTINUES OVER

ILLUSTRATIONS: DUNCAN MACDONALD

DEAD* PILOTS THROUGH HISTORY

(*well almost)

Throughout the history of the world man has sought to emulate the flight of the bird. Many have made it, but few have flown with such style, such finesse, and such total disregard for the safety of others as these famous flyboys.

ICARUS



Icarus was a Greek legend *(What's he doing here then? Ed)* who was incarcerated on Crete and decided to escape by building himself some wings. But guess what he built them out of? Yes. As we all know, he built them out of wax. But why wax, especially as there was a load of balsa wood lying around? We did some extensive research, and can now reveal the answer, which is this: Icarus was a total prat!

DOUGLAS 'STUMPY' BADER

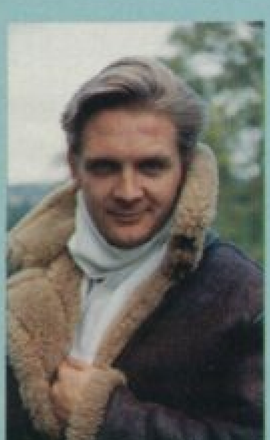


Zipping forward about eight trillion years, we find ourselves in the middle of the Second World war. Look up in the skies over the English Channel and you'll see some Spitfires. Look inside one of the Spitfires and you'll see a rather bizarre sight - a pilot called Douglas Bader. 'What's so bizarre about that?' you ask. Well, have a look at the bottom of his torso and count his legs. That's right: there aren't any. It's a zero limb-count. The clot lost his 'pegs' while showing off one day in his 'wizard kite' (i.e. his plane) - he didn't (as most people think) get them shot off in battle at all. Still, all credit to Stumpy, he went on to command his own fighter squadron, shot down 30,000 'huns' and single handedly won the war. Hoorah!

MIKE SMITH



And with one fell swoop, it's almost back to the present day. A humble hospital radio spot for lathe-operator Mike Smith led to fame as a Radio One DJ, which very soon led to more fame (and considerable fortune) as a sought after TV presenter - it wasn't long before he had enough money to afford his own helicopter. His flying lessons went well, and before you could say 'Nescafé: it's in the taste', Mike and cuddly girlfriend Sarah Greene were 'up up and away' in their beautiful Jet Ranger. Then, one day, silly old Mike tried to land on a tree. Still, they're alright now though. Hoorah!



MARTIN MOTH

The famous 'top gun' of the computer industry, Microprose's ex-RAF boy Martin, likes nothing better than to hone his skills on the company's "very very (very) realistic" flight sims. And if I was an amusing person I could draw a very humorous analogy between his surname and his previous occupation - but I'm not an amusing person, and besides I don't know what 'analogy' means.

FALCON

ZERO HERO

Mirrorsoft

Dunc: Not the first, not the most recent, but arguably the most enjoyable flight sim currently available on 16 bit. Arguably? Well, let's have a butchers!

For me a ZERO Hero game (i.e. one that scores 90 plus) not only has to be good in itself, but the 'front end' and the way everything else ties together has to be well thought out too - and equally well executed. In *Falcon* it is.

Having typed in your 'call sign' (Colonel Love Piston in my case), you progress to the Mission Select screen. Here you choose one of the twelve missions (i.e. bombing an enemy runway protected by SAM sites and Migs) and pick your own rank - from First Lieutenant (indestructible) through Major (hard) to Colonel (bordering on the impossible - except for mega-beings, hem hem). A click on the mouse when you're happy with your selection takes you onto the 'arming your F-16' screen, where an animated Sergeant lets you know if your requests can be backed up by the ammunition stores: the 'conversation' often goes like this....

"Can I have the an ALQ 131 ECM Radar Jamming Pod please, Sarge?"

"Sorry Sir, Bob took the last one."

Anyway, this brilliant front end out of the way means that you're actually ready to fly. Click on 'Take off'.

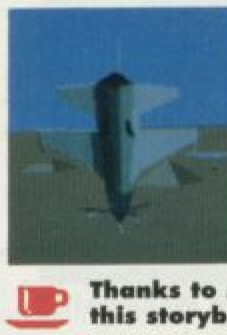
Wow.

This is rather splendid actually - in fact it's better than that. There are so many views to choose from. Inside the cockpit you get the standard forward, back, left and right with all the controls and buttons and stuff in sight - and from there you can go to 'look up mode' where you get these same viewpoints, but without the clutter of the controls. Instead of a thin strip of the outside world, you get a full screens-worth. If you take off, bank to port and look out of the left window in this 'look up mode', you get a fantastic feeling of being there.

You can also choose to view the action from outside the aircraft, whether from the the control tower (watch yourself doing low level Biggin Hill stunts over the airfield - whoops, crashed) or from the 'remote camera' that can be rotated around the plane giving you a full 360° pan, with zoom option. And there's a 'satellite view' as well.

Having taken off (i.e. having memorised all the buttons and not crashed into the control tower), bung your afterburner on full power and climb to 60,000 feet. There's a lot of desert below you, with tiny wiggly blue lines, straight grey lines and little orange pyramids. Stick the nose down, drop to angles one zero (hem hem again) and these reveal themselves to be wide rivers, detailed roads with bridges, telegraph poles etc, and absolutely ginormous mountains. This is your 'manor' - your 'patch'. Ten thousand square miles of desert populated by enemy landing-strips, SAM sites, bridges, buildings and MIG 21's. It's an idea to fly around for a while to familiarise yourself with the surroundings. Then it's time to learn how to use all those weapons you got from the Sergeant - whether we're talking high altitude dive bombing, low level missile strikes, or air to air sidewinder combat against the Migs. You can always choose the Milk Run mission, where you have to bomb three practice buildings on friendly territory - but eventually you're going to have to cross 'the front line'.

I'll come clean, though - my first taste of blood (and I got court martialled for doing it) was when I shot down 'Bob'. (The greedy little bugger!)



OVERALL SCORE 92

ST	AMIGA	PC
AVAILABLE NOW	AVAILABLE NOW	AVAILABLE NOW

Thanks to Martin at Silica Shop, without whose help this storyboard would never have got off the ground.

BANDITS AT THREE O'CLOCK
(Oh good, we've got half an hour to spare then...)

We bet that a lot of you 'armchair flyboys' would love to take on a professional fighter pilot. So guess what, that's exactly what we did. We dragged Martin Moth, PR 'supremo' at Microprose, into the office to take on *Duncan MacDonald* in the head to head option on Mirrorsoft's *Falcon*. Martin is actually a fighter pilot - he's been in several wars and has killed over 270 people. *(Pardon? Ed)* Um, well, the flying bit's true. Anyway here's what happened.



Well, here I am, up in the sky: and what a lovely day it is. I think I'll find a nice spot, put the old crate down and have a picnic. Yes, that's a wizard idea. I'll just make sure Mothy's not in the vicinity - a quick check out of the starboard window should put me at ease...



Yes. All nice and quiet out there. Hey - look, what a super spot for lunch: a picturesque bridge and river setting. Most calming. Oh dear...what's that beeping sound? Oh, it's the warning indicator. Maybe I should have a quick peek out of the rear window...



Yaaaaarrrrrrgggghhhhhhhh!!!!! He's shooting at me. What a scoundrel! Ping ping ping tweeeeeee.... oh no, his bullets have ricocheted off my foldaway aluminium picnic table and pierced the food basket (bang go my cheese and pickle sarnies)...



Yikes, and a couple of the bullets seem to have ricocheted through the canopy as well. Oh dear, I'm suddenly finding it hard to breathe for some reason. Corks, I'm blacking out. (Explosion sound as plane and pilot disintigrate.)



Right, Moth, I learn quickly you know. No picnic thoughts on my mind now! You'll not find me such an easy target this time round...



Ack ack ack. Oh dear, maybe you will. Blimey, I'm not too keen on this 'heading out of control towards the earth at 700 knots' lark - still, it gives me time to check my Yaw Pitch and Yaw Roll instruments.Yes, they're looking good. (Explosion noise as pilot and plane disintegrate.)



Right! Now I mean business. Where are you, Major Martin bloody clever-dick-air-ace 'Moth'? What a stupid name anyway. Hmm, well - there's the airfield he's supposed to be protecting. Hee hee. As he's not around, I think I'll bomb it!!



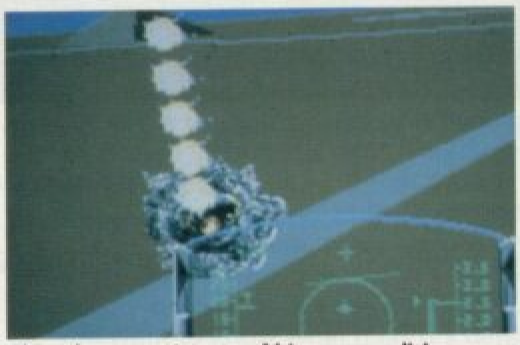
Ack ack ack! Oh no! Peppered again by Moth (the blighter). Still, damage isn't heavy this time round, so maybe I can get the kite down without pranging her too badly. Afterburner off, throttle down, flaps down, airbrakes on. Um, undercarriage down. Earth ahoy......



Erm. Er. Um. Oh dear..... (Explosion sound as pilot and plane disintegrate.)



Tally ho! I'm up again, and this time I'm on the cad's tail. Just a quick tap on the return key to arm my AIM 9-L's. Locked on. Right, Moth, try a couple of sidewinders up the jacksy for size. Woosh, woosh. Ho ho ho ho. At last. Revenge is sweet.



There he goes. A taste of his own medicine. Aaaaaah! What a good feeling it is to see a real fighter pilot fall from the skies. Following his flaming descent seems a bit cheeky, but I need to gloat over such a brilliant kill. Down you go, Major Moth, off to the officers mess in the sky.



Oh dear, I'm not going to be able to pull up in time - I'm going to 'buy the farm' again. Still, there's just time to tell you the final score. In a 'best out of eleven' it was Mothy six, Duncan five. (Explosion sound as pilot and plane disintegrate)......

CONTINUES OVER


MIDWINTER
RAINBIRD



INTERCEPTOR

Electronic Arts

David: *Interceptor* raised a few eyebrows and dropped a few chins way back in '88 when it first appeared. It was the first flight sim to use exterior views and fast filled-vector graphics. It was also special because it was centred in this world - in the San Francisco district to be exact - as opposed to the common-place imaginary battle-field.

The exterior view is great fun. At the press of a key, you're shunted outside to be given a panaromic view of your craft. You can also get the choice of watching your aerial stunts from the control-tower or aircraft carrier.

Before you can go on 'active service' and take on the Ruskies though, you must perform a perfect landing on the aircraft carrier from whence you came. This is quite tricky (a subtle test of timing, precision and flukiness) but rewarding, when you see the mission.



That's a funny shaped boat. Hmm. Maybe it's a submarine. I'll bomb it anyway.

The missions divert from the usual hum-drum seek-and-destroy types, providing a broad and - dare I say it - exciting range. But the real beauty of *Interceptor* is that it's not a flight simulator or an arcade game - it's both! It has enough reality to please the technical purist, and it's accessible enough to attract the hardened trigger man. Once loaded, you can be flying in moments, and crashing in seconds. The more complex and detailed elements of flying have been stripped away.

A couple of things irritated me though. The security system, whereby you type in a code EVERY time you start a mission or crash. And the fact that you can never get close to the MIGs, they always stay as dots on the horizon.

Overall though *Interceptor* is as good a stepping stone between arcade games and flight sims as you're ever likely to find and it's absolutely ruddy brilliant fun to play to boot.

OVERALL SCORE 85

ST	AMIGA	PC
AVAILABLE NOW	AVAILABLE NOW	UNAVAILABLE

ZERO HERO

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Digital Integration

Dunc: This is the one that came out hot on the heels of *Falcon*: and the inevitable comparisons were drawn, with most critics coming down on the side of the Mirrorsoft/Spectrum Holobyte game. At first I agreed with this - but having played *Combat Pilot* for a while, now I'm not so sure.

The game (sorry, simulation) is very much the same as in *Falcon*. You're in charge of an F-16, and you have to select missions and armaments and build up flying hours and 'kills'. It's the implementation that's so different - and, in some respects, rather annoying.

The selection screen is a graphical repesentation of the Squadron crewroom - and you move a cursor arrow around to choose the options. Clicking on the filing cabinet, for instance, selects the pilots log - where your call-sign, amount of flying hours and number of successful missions are kept. You can call up technical data on this screen (enemy planes, your weapons) as well as go into demo mode. The icon that's going to be clicked on most, however, is the missions icon.

There are six missions in all; air to air, runway destruction, interdictor strike, tank attack, reconnaissance and, finally, Operation Conquest - in which you command an entire squadron of F-16's.

Having chosen a mission, you then progress to the map screen, where you can summon up all kinds of crucial information about where you've got to go, what you've got to bomb and how best to get there. From this screen you also have icons which take you to weapons select mode (better than the one in *Falcon*, with a wider choice of goodies available), and the Met Office, where you can do an accurate check on the weather and suss out the height of the cloud cover - you can even choose a night time scenario, which is incredibly atmospheric. And then it's (phew, about time) ready for take off.

Yaaaarrrgghh!!!

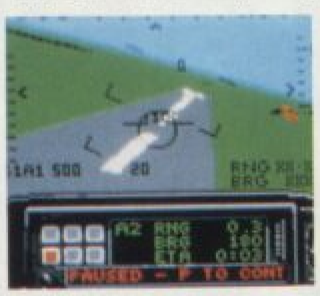
Here's something I HATE about this program. Every single time you start a mission you have to type in a page/paragraph/word code from the manual. EVERY SINGLE TIME. Why not just once, at the beginning of the thing?



Flying at night. Hmm. Can someone turn the lights on please?



Aaah. That's better. You can turn them off again now.



Well - here we are on the final approach. I'm sure I've forgotten something though. Um. Er. Oh no - the undercarriage isn't down!

Anyway, having input the code, you find yourself ready to roll' on the runway. Press the relevant buttons and - whooosh - it's into the skies.

The ground detail is much smaller and rather less detailed than in *Falcon* (but there's a lot more of it), and the update speed is a fraction slower i.e. a tad more jerky. Also, somehow, things feel harder to operate - the plane isn't so responsive. You can't spin it onto its back and do an inverted loop so easily - instead you seem to run out of height rather quickly and hit the deck. (Unless you start from 70,000 feet, that is). It's a guess, as I've no way of knowing short of flying a real F-16, but I reckon this is because *Combat Pilot* is a far more accurate representation of the real thing: in which case it's not a 'fault' at all. Having said this, I'll also add that flying in *Combat Pilot* isn't quite as much 'fun' as in *Falcon*. Part of the trouble is the cockpit views. All you get is the standard left/right/forward/back vistas. I could forgive the lack of an external camera, but the lack of 'look up' mode is something of a pain.

Overall though, apart from all the little niggles and the disk accessing that goes on between games (yes, there are some fair old pauses), there's something absolutely brilliant about this simulation. Do you want to know what it is? It's depth. Somehow the game seems immense, and it stands alone on that point. It's quite hard to get into, and takes a while to grip you totally. But once it has, it doesn't let go.

OVERALL SCORE 90

ST	AMIGA	PC
AVAILABLE NOW	AVAILABLE NOW	AVAILABLE NOW

ZERO reviews

STOP RIGHT HERE! 'Cos this is the bit where we tell you all about the brilliant ZERO reviews system. We reckon we've got the meatiest, most accurate and most entertaining reviews section in the known universe (and beyond). Unlike any other multi-format magazine, the ZERO review pages will give equal weight to ST, Amiga and PC reviews of the hottest new games of the moment, and each reviewer will be a bit of an expert on the format he or she covers.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	90
S	SOUND	90
A	ADDICTIVENESS	81
E	EXECUTION	83

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A graphical masterpiece and a brilliant conversion to boot — **84**

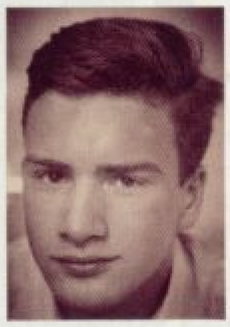
Every month the best games will have a full three or four pages devoted to them. These meaty will have a basic run through of the scenario and game genre, followed by detailed reviews of all the different formats the game is currently available on. Dotted about will be boxes containing some rather important info... so read on. box is rather straightforward, with marks (out of 100) awarded for Graphics, Sound, Addictiveness and Execution. The first three are self-explanatory, but here's what Execution means. If programmers have used tried and tested routines ('3-D scroll' for instance) which look a trifle 'old hat', and aren't really pushing the machine or trying to cover new ground, they won't get top marks here. And if they *have* done something different and brill, they will. Logical, non? There's also a brief summary next to the Final Score – useful for lazy people and dyslexics (it'll save them a considerable amount of time). The score – which is marked out of 10 – is tied in with the Execution factor. Is there a lot of disk accessing? Is it really necessary? For instance, a game that loads in a big title screen (however 'fabby') between each 'go' can be incredibly annoying, when all you want to do is get stuck back in. As for the box, this simply gives you the details surrounding a game's, erm, release. And what's the highest accolade a game can get? Only the – the ultimate award which is given to games that the ZERO review team considers particularly outstanding. To qualify for a ZERO Hero the game must get an overall score of at least 90. And games that don't get the four page mega-treatment will still get coverage on all available formats – in the form of ZERO . All games here will still be reviewed in depth – just using less ink! is the space reserved for new formats of games that have already been seen on other machines. We'll review the updated format and include an issue reference so you can check out what we had to say about the initial versions when they first came out. And finally there's . These are the budget reviews - shorter and sweeter to digest and kinder on the pocket (and the Scandinavian pine forests). These only get an overall score 'cos, erm... they're cheap.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Tintin
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
PRICE	£19.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	November

CRITICS' CORNER

And who are the people who are acting as your guides through the software jungle this month? Let's take a look through the oblong window...



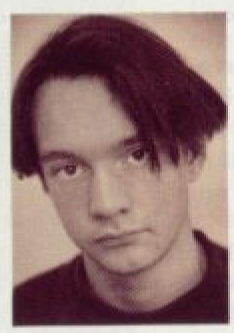
Jonathan Davies: Avid amateur zoologist Jonathan has aquired a new subject for his rather large 'jungle animal' collection - Nigel, the Candiru. "A Candiru is basically a one inch long extremely vicious skinny tadpole with barbs on its back," he told us proudly. "But you have to be very careful not to have a 'wee wee' near one, because they zoom up into your 'thingy' and get lodged there." Crikes. Where does he keep Nigel then? "Erm, actually I had a little mishap with him." You don't mean..... "Er, yes. He's being removed on Thursday."



Sean Kelly: While watching an edition of *01 For London* (Thames TV's 'trendy' arts programme), Sean had an absolutely brilliant idea. Well... he had an idea, anyway. It was this: a show covering art, fashion, music and leisure activities for the South West of England. He's in the middle of negotiations with TSW as we speak, so look out for *032 (633) For Cornwall!* The first episode'll carry items on welly-throwing, Fat Willy's Surf Shack, shark spotting off Land's End and the Helston scrumpy festival as well as an exclusive interview with Brian Connolly of The Sweet.



Duncan MacDonald: Duncan decided that he was a bit of a 'camera wizard', so we appointed him 'ZERO screenshot photographer'.
"What's this one?" we asked him.
"*Shufflepuck Café*," he replied smugly.
"But it's just a massive blur," we suggested.
"Yes. Arty, isn't it. I went for a ten minute exposure on that one - I'm quite pleased with it actually. Do you want to see my *Dynamite Dux/ Strider* 'montage' effect?"
We declined and took him off all photography duties – for good.



David McCandless: Young Macca, once a paragon of virtue, has been slowly wandering off the 'straight and narrow' road of lawfulness. Only the other day we received a typically chirpy phone call from him....
"Hi, it's me. I've just nicked a car."
"Really?"
"Yeah. A Roller. It's brilliant. I got 140 out of it down Hendon High Street."
"Where are you calling from?"
"Hendon Police station."
Oh dear.



Marcus 'Binky' Berkmann: Plucky Marcus never tires of subjecting himself to danger: the opening sequences of many *James Bond* films have been stolen from his 'sports portfolio'. Remember the one where 007 parachuted out of a Landrover that was falling down a cliff? Well, Marcus made £18 out of owning the copyright on that stunt. Marcus and his chums' latest craze is formation stack cave diving, in which they parachute (standing on one another's shoulders) into the inky voids of flooded subterranean caverns. Tally-ho.



Matt Bielby: Back on the subject of cars again, Matt's pretty unlucky as well.
"I'm going to buy a car," he announced about a year ago, fondling a copy of *Loot*.
Time passed....
"I'm going to buy a car," he declared about six months ago, flicking through *Exchange & Mart*.
Time passed....
"Can anyone lend me two thousand pounds?" he asked about three months ago, tapping a page in another copy of *Loot*.
Time passed....

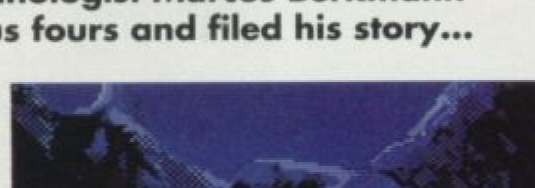
TINTIN ON THE MOON



Blistering barnacles! The bashi-bazouks have got Tintin and gone and turned him into - gasp - a computer game! Well, leading French software house Infogrames has at least. World renowned Tintinologist *Marcus Berkmann* donned his plus fours and filed his story...

There, done it. It's taken me two hours to oil that quiff into place, and I finally managed it with a lethal combination of honey, Bostik, Supa-Bastard No-Crinkle Mega-Gel (it says here), navel fluff, raspberry jam and a smidgen of Castrol GTX. Now I can face the world as fearless reporter and all-round goodie-goodie Tintin.

Of course you don't really have to go to such trouble to play Infogrames' new Tintin game, *Tintin Sur La Lune* (froggy version), but since the boys at Infogrames have obviously gone to such trouble themselves, it seems only right to make an effort.

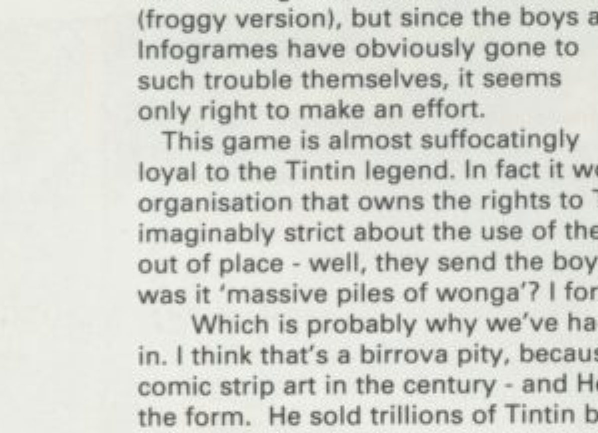


The title screen - five... four... three... two... one... erm... oh yes, blast off!

This game is almost suffocatingly loyal to the Tintin legend. In fact it would have to be - Studios Hergé, the Belgian organisation that owns the rights to Tintin (Hergé himself pegged it in 1983), are unimaginably strict about the use of their beloved boy reporter, and if anything at all is out of place - well, they send the boys round. 'Integrity' is the name of the game (or was it 'massive piles of wonga'? I forget).

Which is probably why we've had to wait until now to see any game with Tintin in. I think that's a birrova pity, because for me, Tintin's the tops. There's no greater comic strip art in the century - and Hergé, who started up in 1929, did virtually invent the form. He sold trillions of Tintin books, they're still selling trillions, and they're still brilliantly funny.

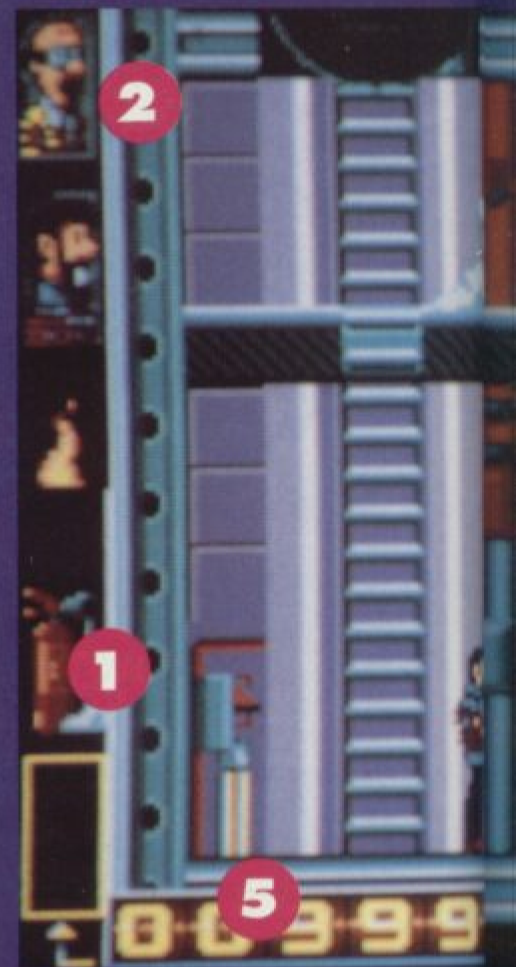
But enough of that: let's look at the game. It's a distillation of two of the very best books, *Destination Moon* and *Explorers On The Moon*, both first published in the early fifties. What's remarkable, if you read the books now, is not how much Hergé got wrong - he was writing way before even Sputnik was launched - but how much he got right. Unfortunately we don't actually get to see the moon itself in the game - or at least not very much of it. 'Cos the game ends when Tintin gets to the moon. I suppose *Tintin On His Way To The Moon But Not Quite Got There Yet* wasn't quite a snappy enough title. (Although the Germans have called it *Tim Und Struppi Auf Dem Mond*, which isn't exactly amazing either.)



Guide your rocket through space and do remember to pick up those little yellow and red jobbies - that is, if you plan to get through to the next part of the game!





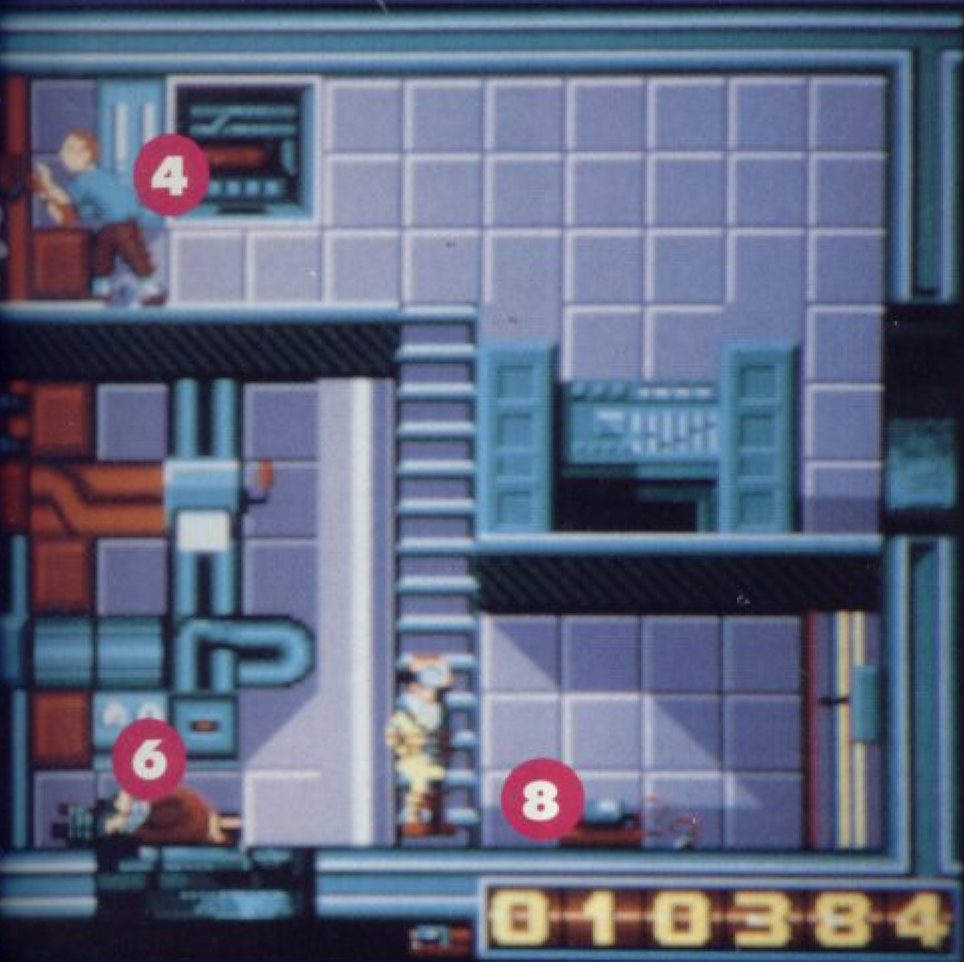




***"Ooh la la!* Something fishy's going on here, Captain. Quick - fetch the fire brigade (unless you fancy 'smoked' Haddock, haw haw)..."**



***"Sacre bleu!* I've got to defuse the bomb or my trusty little chum Snowy gets it. Umm, now where can it be? *(Kerpow! Splaat!)* Oops - sorry, Snowy!"**



GIVE 'EM A ROCKET

Here we are inside Tintin's rocket. Can you guide Tintin through to put out all the fires, disarm the bombs and scupper the evil Colonel Boris?

1 EXTINGUISHER Pick this up to put the fires out. You have to stand just far enough away from the fires to do this - too far away and you'll miss, too near and you'll fry. Hard to get right when the Colonel's after you.

2 A PRISONER Free the wretch just by touching him.

3 THE CAPTAIN Pithecanthropus! Squawking popinjay! Lily-livered bandicoot!

4 TINTIN The "ace" reporter himself. Note trendy blue jumper with elegant pokey-out shirt collars.

5 ENERGY MONITOR Your energy monitor has a tendency to over-react when you do anything like, say, get shot or incur third-degree burns. Watch out for exploding bombs, too - they don't do it any good either.

6 COLONEL BORIS Beware Bordurians brandishing Lugers...

7 A FIRE Well, what are you doing just standing there? Put it out!

8 AN UNEXPLODED BOMB Here's the second best sort of bomb - an unexploded one. The best sort is a defused one - and you can do that just by touching it.



"Fossilized fish hooks, Tintin. You prize purple jelly fish - not only are your trews a mite pervy, but you've let the Colonel escape..."

The game starts with the launch of the rocket (which is based, incidentally, on the German V-2 rockets used during the war). Stage one is the flight of the rocket - you zoom through the ether trying to pick up various little coloured spheres that sit in space waiting to be collected. Yellow ones are fuel (you need this to fly, which makes a certain amount of sense) and red ones give you points - get eight of these and you move onto the next stage. The longer you take to complete this section, the fewer points you get. Crashing into one of the asteroids that appears from time to time (usually just behind a red or yellow sphere) is also likely to slow down your journey a touch.

Get past this and you get into the main gameplay - inside the rocket. Here we get our first glimpse of the game's various characters - Tintin himself (you are he); Snowy, his dog (who yaps a lot); Captain Haddock, the retired seafarer who likes a tipple; Professor Calculus, the scientist whose giant brain has enabled the moon trip to take place in the first place; Wolff, the chief engineer, who appears to be sleepwalking; and Colonel Boris Jurgens, the Bordurian spy who is determined to sabotage the whole mission. The action takes place over six screens, as Colonel Boris sets off bombs, tries to shoot people, takes prisoners and starts small fires all over the place. You have to defuse all the bombs, avoid being shot, free all the prisoners and put out the fires.

If you manage this once, you revert to stage one again, only this time the action is a little faster, there are rather more asteroids and everything's just that weeny bit harder. Past this is another jolly around the ship; this time there are nine rooms and they're all quite different to the ones you saw before. We also meet Thompson and Thompson for the first time, the two incompetent moustachioed detectives who stow away on the trip and so endanger it at every turn.

Overall there are five phases like this, before you finally arrive at the moon and have to control the rocket's thrusters if you want to land in one piece. Sadly the game then ends - there's no exploration of the moon itself.



Still, this is as faithful a licence as we've seen, and as perhaps we'll ever see. As the Captain would say, "Billions of bilious blue blistering barnacles in a thundering typhoon!"

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Tintin
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
PRICE	£19.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	November



Marcus: You really know that you're booting up something a bit useful when you clap your eyes on the introductory sequence to *Tintin On The Moon.* The rocket awaits take-off. Drums roll. Technicians and vehicles disappear off-screen. The astronauts arrive in their car and disappear into the rocket. Gantries are removed. Three - two - one - fire! and off it zooms, with a shot of it pulling away from the blue and green earth below amazingly evocative of the books. Gasp!

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
No especially long waits, although it takes yonks to fill in the high score table. (Hem hem).

The opening sequence occupies one of the two disks all to itself. The actual game is on disk two, and that's not bad either, even if it is a slight anti-climax after the brilliance of the initial bits. Even so, this is a well thought out game, with two quite separate sections, each with its own distinctive gameplay. The rocket flight is swift and well thought out, with superb collision detection and a particularly impressive sense of perspective. Even on the ST I often find myself less than fully convinced by 3-D displays like this, but in *Tintin* it works fine.

What's especially good about the rocket sequence is that, although tricky to master initially, you don't get bogged down in what is essentially an introductory sequence to the game



itself. The platform-and-laddering of part two is much more meaty, and also pretty hard at first. It took me a while to suss out that, by letting Tintin go anywhere near the fires, I was abbreviating his life expectancy rather severely. The instructions - translated not too clearly from French - are somewhat less than clear on the matter.

What's rather more boffo is that it doesn't stop there. When you've solved the first part, you're back to flying the rocket, but the substantial number of asteroids hurtling towards you, together with the way your fuel now seems to run out that much more quickly, really gets the adrenalin flowing.

So, I'm impressed. Obviously I'm a little disappointed that there's nothing on the moon at all, especially as the moon sequences are the best bits of the books. But what has been included is true to the books and no less fun to play. Neat work, Infogrames, don't you agree, Captain? "Billions of bilious blue blistering barnacles in a thundering typhoon!" Yes, I think he likes it too.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	90
S	SOUND	90
A	ADDICTIVENESS	81
E	EXECUTION	83

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A graphical masterpiece and a brilliant conversion to boot.

84



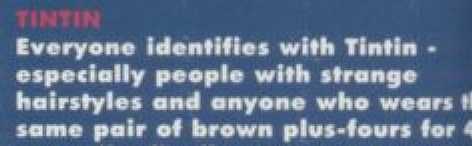
"Crumbs. I've made it to level two, but Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus have been taken hostage by Colonel Boris - the blackguard!"

TINTIN'S PETITS POIS

A fine flock of feckless French frogs for you to feast your yeux on. (Well, *you* try and think of an f-word meaning "eyes"...)



TINTIN
Everyone identifies with Tintin - especially people with strange hairstyles and anyone who wears the same pair of brown plus-fours for 45 years (he finally got some trousers in *Tintin And The Picaros* in 1976). He's the hero, and as such has inspired some heroic deeds - a small child in Germany once managed to capture two burglars and turn them over to the police "because that's what Tintin would have done". Even so, much of the time he's a bit of a goodie-goodie.



CAPTAIN HADDOCK
Lovable old seadog who's very fond of his Loch Lomond whisky (no water). Interesting to observe the way his character develops from the sad old drunk of his first book, *The Crab With The Golden Claws,* to the mainly heroic (if still fond of a drop) stalwart of the later volumes. Inherits Marlinspike Hall in *Red Rackham's Treasure,* upon which he takes up a life of leisure, interrupted only by all the usual adventures.



SNOWY
Tintin's loyal pooch whose initial role as Tintin's confidant was rather eroded by the arrival of Captain Haddock in *The Crab.* Still, very good at woofing and arfing, with some excellent howling thrown in from time to time. Never seems to need 'taking for a walk'.

Anthropithecus!
Coelacanth!
Anamorphic aardvark!
Prattling porpoise!
Bashi-bazouk!
Squawking popinjay!
Artichoke!
Ectoplasmic by-product!
Carpathian caterpillar!
Freshwater swab!
Raggle-taggle ruminants!
(addressed at llamas)



PROFESSOR CALCULUS

Hergé experimented with a number of dotty scientists (including one memorably called Sophocles Sarcophagus) before he plumped for Cuthbert Calculus in *Red Rackham's Treasure*. Although clearly dippy, and indeed loopy, Calculus also has a gigantic brain, with which he invents things like moon rockets. Hard of hearing (i.e. stone deaf).



WOLFF

Appears only in the *Moon* books as Calculus' assistant, but then revealed to be... but that would give the plot away. Go and buy the books yourself.



COLONEL BORIS JORGENS

Initially crops up in *King Ottokar's Sceptre* as a Bordurian spy in the court of the Syldavian King. A thoroughly nasty bit of work, as you can tell by his slicked back hairstyle and piggy little eyes.



THOMPSON AND THOMPSON

The deeply clottish policemen whose forays into national dress are invariably completely ridiculous. Quite early characters, in fact - they first appear in the fifth book, *The Blue Lotus*, long before Haddock or Calculus. They're still as hopeless 30 years later, though. For the record, Thompson is the one whose moustache curls up.

MERDE ALORS!

Captain Haddock is famous for his insults, which he hurls at everyone and anyone who does not live up to his own high standards (e.g. anyone who puts ice in his Loch Lomond). Here's a selection:



Macca: I'm always a bit pessimistic about comic to computer conversions. They have no end of cutesy big-eyed graphic potential, but gameplay always seems to be a bit on the thin side and they often end up being a bit...well...crap really. But with *Tintin On The Moon*, we've got a good storyline, a good intro, good graphics, good gameplay and a good review. . .

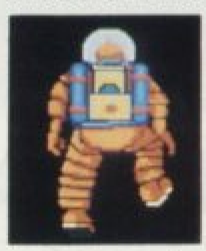
The game starts with a brilliant opening sequence. The scarlet rocket squats silently on the launch pad and the rocket-site bustles with activity. Lights glare in the darkness. Cars and people mill about. A limo charges across the pad. A horn blares. The gangways break and roll back. The countdown starts. Two. . .one. . .blam! The rocket streaks away into the night, with atmospheric drums rolling in the background. Brilliant. I loved it.

After the intro, the first sub-game is not so graphically retina-detonating. With all its asteroids to avoid and energy pods to collect it's difficult and infuriatingly challenging. Really you just want to zip through this part and get onto the game proper. Here goes. Ziiiiiiiiiiiiiiiip!

Ah, that's better. Now we're into the game proper which is basically a platforms and ladders adventure in space. Tintin (accurate right down to upright quiff and schoolboy shorts) hurtles around the corridors at an amazing pace, followed by heavy-fisted Haddock, eccentric Calculus, and fluffy Snowy. The pace is fast and furious and you must frantically search the six levels for the bomb and fire extinguisher, avoiding Colonel Boris the antagonistic stowaway. He wanders about lighting fires, priming bombs and frazzling you with his laser gun. Each level is interspersed with the rocket and asteroid sequences. So it's action, ziiiiip, action, ziiiiip...

HASSLE FACTOR: 1
Bit of foot-tapping between sequences.

The graphics are brilliant, capturing the look of Herge's original perfectly. The sprites move fast and animate really well, (Tintin himself has over 40 frames of animation), though the flip screen scrolling is a bit disorientating at first. The levels get gradually larger - the first has six screens, the second nine and so on. And they're so addictive - the lure of getting to the later levels, and the thought of an end sequence equal to the opening sequence will keep you a-Tintin-ing until the early hours of the morning.



THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	90
S	SOUND	75
A	ADDICTIVENESS	82
E	EXECUTION	87

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

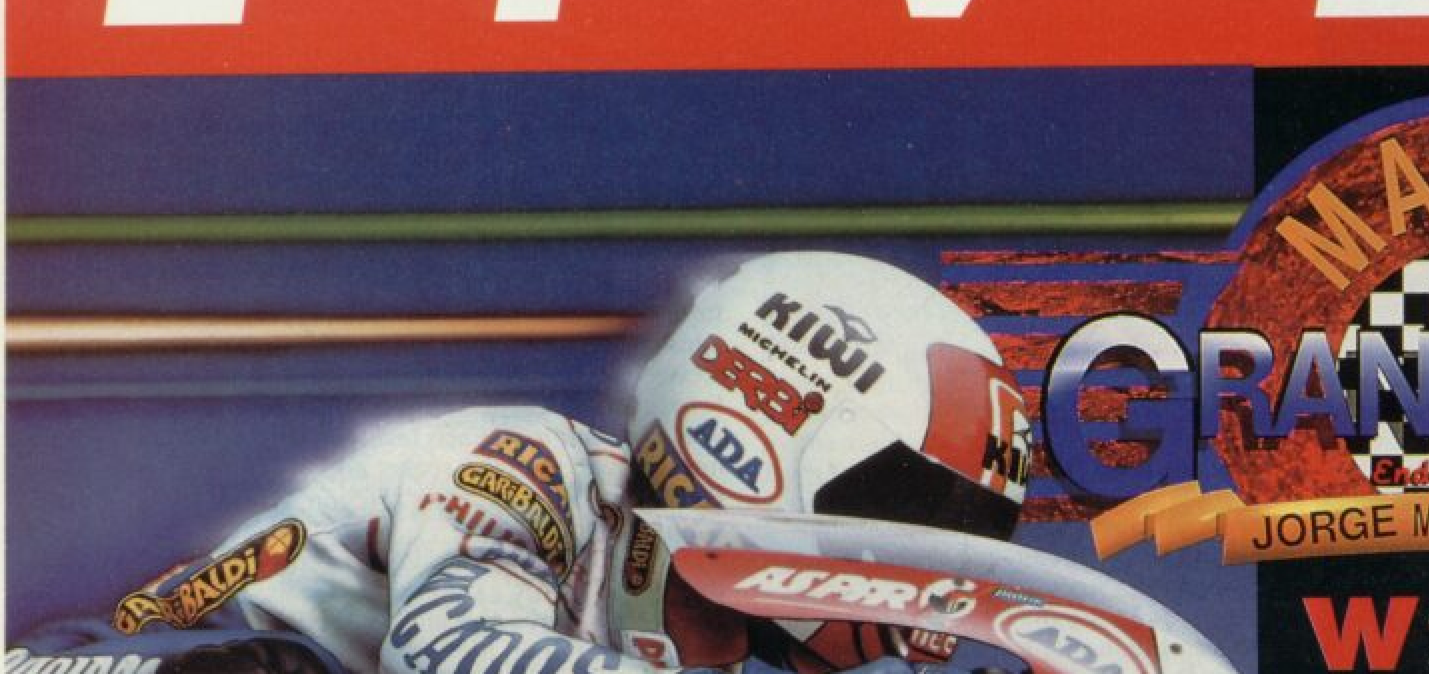
***Tintin On The Moon* captures the atmpsphere and humour of Herge's original brilliantly. From paper to pixel, Tintin has made a perfect transition.**

85



"@@!!***! Er... what happened? Oh look, that horrid Colonel Boris is trussed up like a chicken - but not for long, I fear..."**

L I V E !



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JORGE MARTINEZ "ASPAR"

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grid (if and when you qualify).

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struggle for victory.

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chronometre, position and laps left to fi
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huge bottle of champagne in celebration



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CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Neeeeoooooooowwww! We all know about the little translation hiccup that caused the original coin-op *Continental Circuit* to materialise in Europe as *Continental Circus*. Now *David McCandless* takes a look at how *Continental Circus* has translated to the 16 bitties. Neeeeeeeeoooooowwww!

Continental Circus was the first in a 'new-wave' of driving games in the arcades, after the race 'em up drought that followed *OutRun*. The coin-op boasted extra-swift graphics, multiple locations, and most revolutionary of all, true 3D. The player had to watch the game through a special visor, and the on-screen graphics flickered at an alarming rate to produce that legendary 'reach out and grab you' effect. Unfortunately, playing for long periods gave you a migraine,and many arcade bosses ran a nice little sideline in paracetamol vending machines.

Now *Circus* has arrived on the 16-bit, sadly (or not, depending on the sensitivity of your cerebellum) missing the 3D feature. Nevertheless *Circus* is easily one the fastest and bestest driving games you'll see in the home.

ROUND THE BEND

The game starts with a quick overview of the track. There are eight courses, spanning the globe, ranging from America to Mexico, to Japan and that metropolis, Dorking-on-the-Weir. Each track comes equipped with its own array of tight bends, cunning chicanes, tighter bends, straights, and yet more bends, all slyly sequenced to give even those genetically descended from Nigel Mansell cramp where it hurts most.

Then it's on to the starting grid, with you resting in 100th place. A buxom bint parades around for a while, then departs sharpishly as the manly rev of sampled engines fills the air. The light steps from red to green - and they're off!

The road is three cars wide, and hurtles along at an amazing pace. Trees and billboards blur past at the sides, while the track meanders left and right, raising and dipping convincingly. Other cars appear out of the horizon. You bullet past them, engines roaring. You can almost smell the diesel. The other car drivers are quite unskillful at first. They generally stick to their lanes, and perform predictable manoeuvres around bends. Venture to Monaco or Japan however, and your opponents become cleverer and more weasel-like. They change lane when you least expect it, drive three abreast, and jangle their furry dice at you.

SMASH 'EM UP

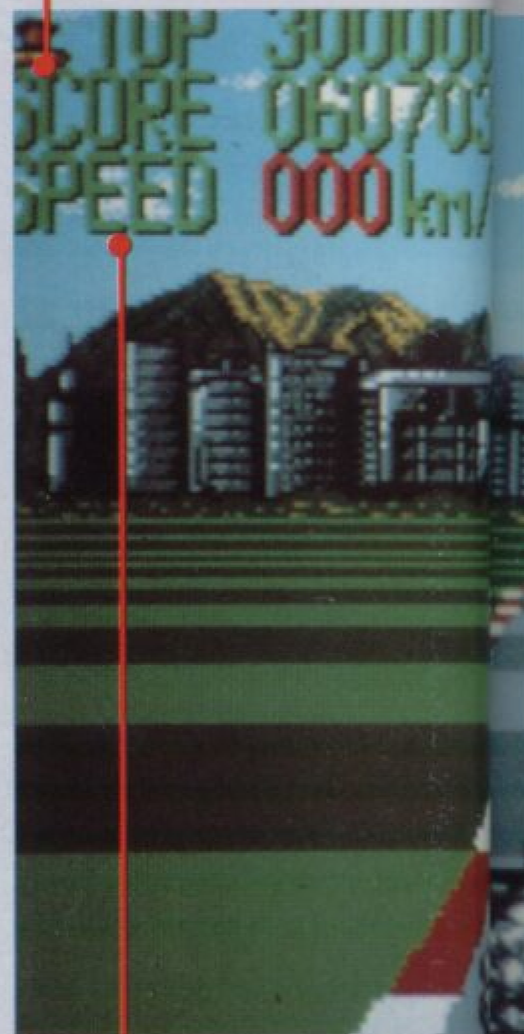
One collision with any other car sets your engine on fire; two smashes and you make like Mansell (i.e. spin out of control and blame the car). If you get hit once, you can be saved by pulling into the pits. Here, a couple of engineers charge on and swiftly douse the flames with a fire extinguisher.

Timing is quite crucial. Along the track are markers, which extend your time limit. On the later tracks you simply can't afford to crash, since the delay means you'll more than likely run out of time millimetres from the chequered flag.

The playability, the excitement, the realism. A good conversion of the coin-op, definitely.

WHAT'S WHAT	
TITLE	Continental Circus
PUBLISHER	Virgin/Mastertronic
PRICE	£19.99
FORMAT	Amiga/ST
RELEASED	Now!

Details of what you're wearing, and all the latest looks for the budding Nigel Mansell (*Tell the truth. Ed.*) Whether you're in top or bottom gear is indicated here.



Indicates speed. Just say no. It's wonderful taking off at about 400km/hour in low gear. I couldn't do it in my Toledo.

Rrrumrumrum rumrumm..... Ready to burn rubber, kick ass and er... go very fast actually. Now if only the woman cleaning the track would move her ass...



The really useful map shown as you reach each stage, allowing you to make sure that you crash fairly close to a pitstop.



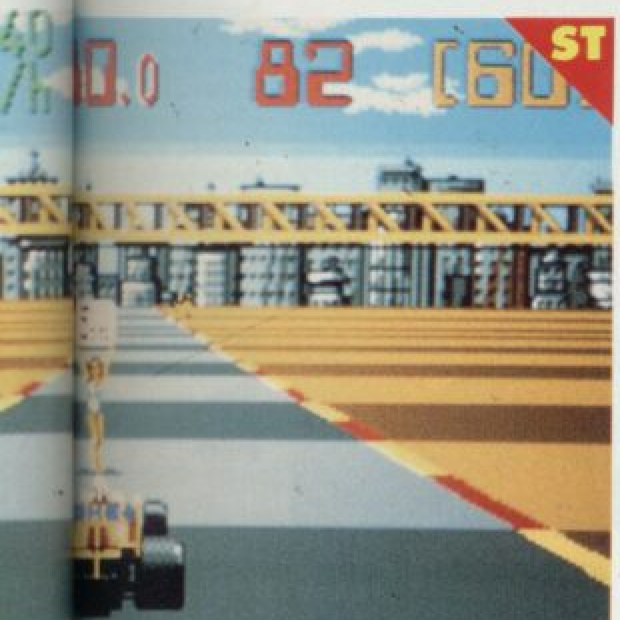
How many bimbos you've (*Stop it! Ed*) What you've actually racked up so far in your bid to be 'king (or queen-right on) of the high score table'.

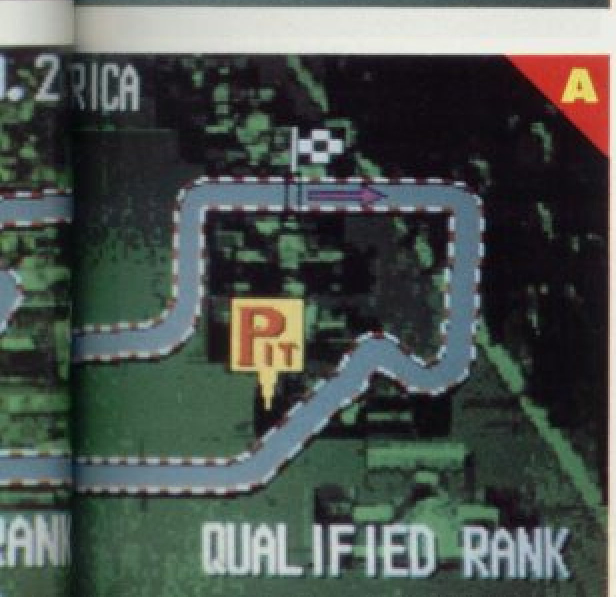
The rank which you must achieve in order to qualify for the next stage — both the time and qualifying rank must be reached.



Time left to reach the next stage. Pretty obvious really, unless you're incredibly dense. If you're pretty nippy you get extended time.

Your current world ranking, which in this case is pretty.. how can I put this... crap.





Macca: *Continental Circus* is FAST! The track, the scenery, the cars, even the high score table all hurl about at incredible speeds. The speedo clocks up to a max of about 395 km/h, and you get a phenomenal impression of speed with the scenery and road-line rocketing about the screen. In fact, this is the first racing game I've played on the Amiga when I've actually felt exhilerated. I was gritting my teeth as I screeched around the hairpins, groaned aloud when I collided with my umpteenth Ferrari, and almost cheered when I eventually made it past Monaco (a track coughed up from Satan's bottom if ever I saw one).

The road is brilliant. It curves around bends, hills and valleys amazingly fast, just like the arcade. The graphics are good but not stunning, some animations had to be sacrificed for velocity. The intro screens are backed by some excellent digitized in-action shots of Grand Prix and the like; but the in-game horizon graphics and scenery are a bit bleak and usually out of scale. The cars are good though, detailed and immediately recognisable.

I am surprised how faithful *Circus* 16-bit is to its arcade father. The 3D has obviously gone, but little else has disappeared. The brilliant crash sequence (when the car erupts and fragments of fuselage and driver 'explode out at you') is sadly missed.

One feature that has been retained however is the rain shower. Randomly, during play, the sky suddenly clouds over and it starts to rain. The road becomes slippery, and the corners take that much extra-skill to manage. I lapped up the challenge, opting not to change to low gear when cornering - they're still picking up the wreckage. The sound has been directly sampled from the original, and consists of loud neeeeowwwwww's and rumbling engine noises. The synthy tunes are bearable.

But the thing that makes *Continental Circus* a great game is the addictiveness. It's unbelievably addictive. The timing, the competition, the credit system, the exhilaration, the speed, the lure of extra levels - they all come together to make it one of the most compulsive games ever. You'll be mumbling, "Just one go," into the early hours. So get into your mini, switch on the turbo boost, drive on round to the pits and pick up your copy of *Continental Circus* NOW!

HASSLE FACTOR: 1
There's a five second delay before you actually start racing which is a bit annoying when you're all 'geared' up and ready to go. *(Groan Ed)*

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	80
S	SOUND	80
A	ADDICTIVENESS	95
E	EXECUTION	93

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

First class race'em-up, with fluid track and ultra-swift gameplay. More addictive than tortilla chips in chille sauce (but easier on your colon).

90

Jonathan: With a name as enticing as *Continental Circus* I was expecting great things of this game, so was pleased to find that the ST has not really suffered in comparison with the Amiga. Gameplay's all there and the graphics aren't half bad - neither is the sound.

Driving round and round in wiggly circles is what it's all about and *Circus* accomplishes this task very well - it's basically *Pole Position* with knobs on. There's a frightening impression of speed, although it's a shame that it's created by light and dark lines coming towards you in the road rather than more adventurous means. Your vehicle also proves to be very nippy when dodging between the rest of the 100 (!) cars taking part in the race.

Realism more or less goes out of the window. This is the first time I've tried changing down into first at 400 km/h (and got away with it) and I'm sure the delicious blonde who stands in front of you to signal the start of the race isn't really acting in her best interests. Also, how come, although you're in front at the start of the race and only three or four cars overtake you before you get up to a decent speed, there are millions of cars further down the course to overtake? Well weird! Perhaps I'm just picking holes, as none of these things affects the gameplay.

HASSLE FACTOR: 1
It keeps obscuring your view with silly messages.

For pure, unadulterated, mindless enjoyment, something like *Circus* is hard to beat. All it boils down to is holding the joystick in the forward position and waggling it to the left or right every now and then, which is just the ticket at the end of a hard day's toil. If you want something a little more thought-provoking, then what are you doing reading about a racing game anyway? Go away!

There are a couple of 'features' in *Circus* that make it differ from its contemporaries. Firstly, when you hit another car you don't instantly blow up. Instead, you drive along for a while spewing out smoke and flames - then you blow up. However, if you can find the pits fast enough you can call in for repairs. Invariably though, disaster strikes just as you pass the pits, so it's quicker to simply crash and get a new motor! There - a playing tip for you!! The other feature? Oh, rain.

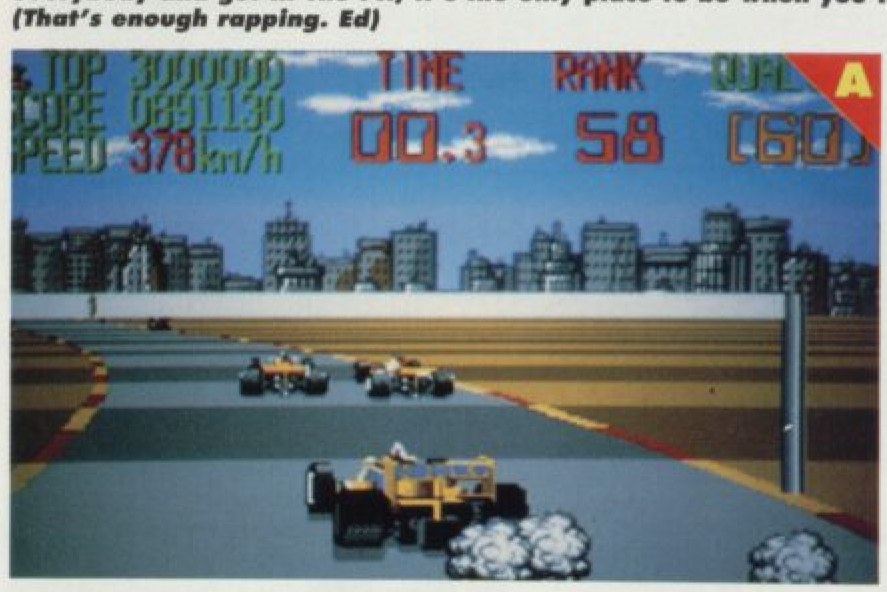
Graphics, sound and all that kind of stuff are pretty good, though I'll always wish they could have been better. There's a constant brrummm noise as you drive along, building up to a wwweeeooor as the revs build up, then every so often, complete silence and a neeeoww as another car passes. Pktchoof! indicates a collison.

If you're looking for a very playable conversion of the arcade game, then this is it. The programmers have done extremely well, so I can't fault it in that respect.

Red, Amber, Green. And I'm off....



This is the PITS!!!! Hang about, I feel a 'rap' coming on. 'Now listen everybody and get In The Pit, it's the only place to be when you're in the...' *(That's enough rapping. Ed)*



Let's see now, I'm on fire, and have 0.03 seconds to get across the line. 'Easy' he said, with a manic laugh, just before his car burst into flames and he was barbequed like a sausage on a stick.



Among the hazards you'll have to endure as you race across America is dripping white paint. Well, it's rain actually, it just looks like dripping paint.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	80
S	SOUND	77
A	ADDICTIVENESS	88
E	EXECUTION	85

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A fast and furious extremely good conversion of the original coin-op. If you like your racing games fast and addictive then you'll love this.

88



FLY LOW, HIT HARD!

'The mix between action and realism is terrific'
– ACE rated 952 – Advanced Computer Entertainment.

'F-16 Combat Pilot wins hands down'
– 5 star game – New Computer Express.

'F-16 Combat Pilot pulls out all the stops'
– game of the month, The Games Machine.

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

I'm primed for action as my F-16 leaves the runway. This time my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat warning – interceptors closing fast! I quickly select dogfight mode and arm a Sidewinder. We both fire at the same time – chaff and a high-g turn out manoeuvres his missile. A loud explosion tells me he's not so lucky.

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to switch on the ground radar and arm the laser-guided Mavericks. I fire six missiles in quick succession, Lantirn automatically locking on to each tank. With flak bursting around me I dive for cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower and request a talkdown for my night landing.

Another successful mission in Operation Conquest – the ultimate test for any pilot…



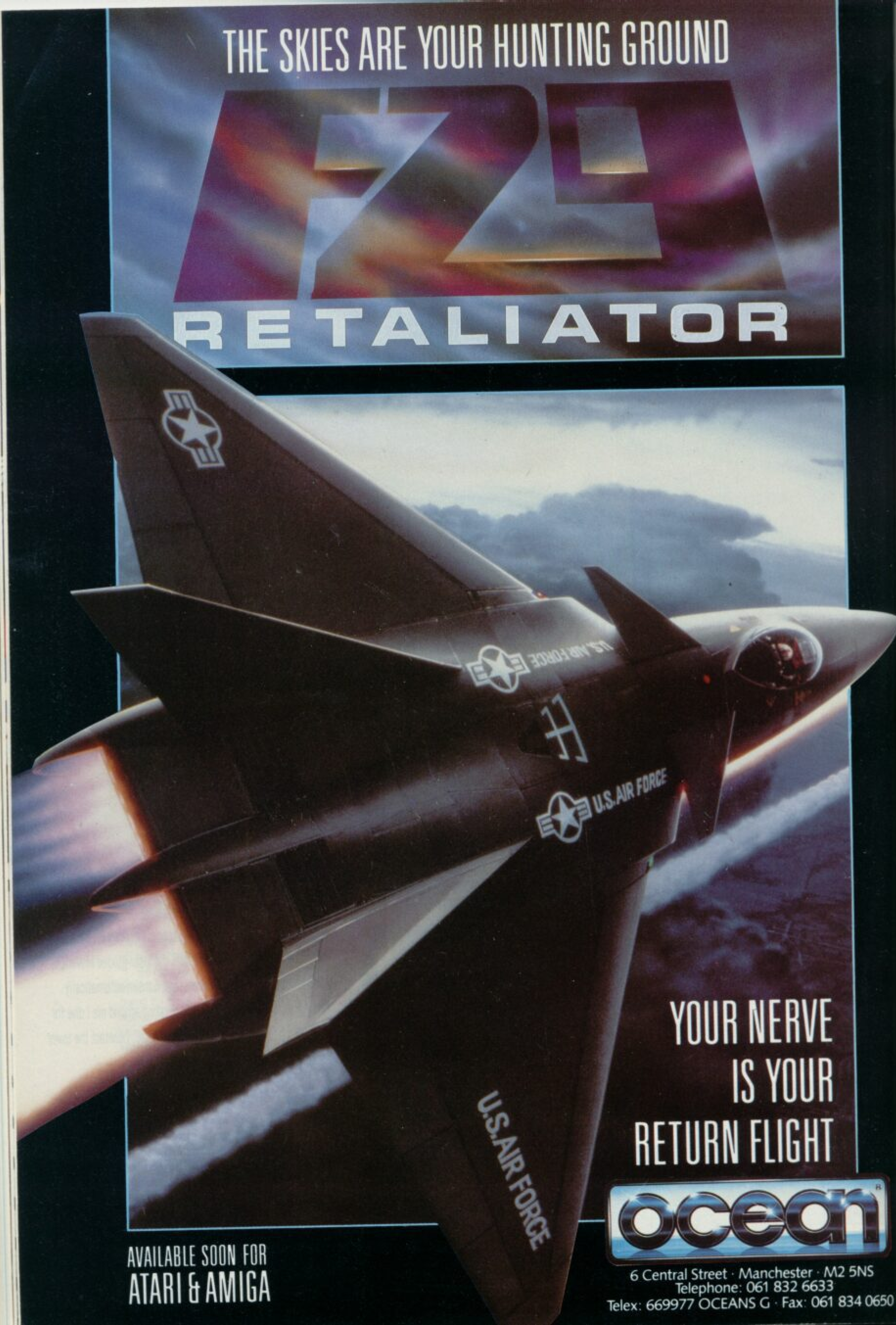
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DO YA WANNA TOUCH? YEAH!

WIN! WIN! WIN!

COMPO

A very touchable Saisho stereo VHS 4000 video recorder complete with a video copy of *The Untouchables.*



PLUS 10 copies of the even more touchable *Untouchables* game from Ocean.



The roaring twenties Chicago-style were pretty dodgy times for us mere mortals. Al Capone, the greatest gangster of them all, ruled the roost with his bunch of terrorizing, trilbied thugs. Piano wire ties and concrete overcoats were the heppest wear. And to top it all off the prohibition laws meant no alcohol! Think about it fellow soaks - no long sessions down the boozer or any tinnies at home!!

Still, one good thing to come out of it all was *The Untouchables*. movie one of the biggest blockbusters of last year. And now Ocean is releasing the computer game of the movie based, of course, on the exploits of Eliot Ness, the dude who managed to put Al Capone behind bars - for tax dodging.

Taxable Assets

There'll be no taxing problems for the winner of this compo though, cos first prize is a well swish state-of-the-art Saisho remote control video worth nigh on £400 sovs. It's packed full of all the usual goodies including 28 day/eight programme timer as well as an extended play option which'll let you fit eight hours of recording onto a four hour tape. And we've thrown in a copy of *The Untouchables* video. There's also 10 runners-up prizes of *The Untouchables* game too.

Tax Free

To stand a chance of winning one of these prizes (guaranteed tax free of course) all you have to do is answer the following boozy quezzies...

1) Identify the following tipples from their advertising slogans...
a) "_______ refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach."
b) "_________ probably the best lager in the world."
c) "I bet he drinks _____________."
2) *Untouchables* star Sean Connery used to play James Bond - how does 007 like his martinis?
3) Name Al Capone's favourite sport. *(What? Ed)*

Now What?

Right just fill in the answers on the coupon and send it (or a photocopy) to Don't Touch Me Competition, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.

RULES

- Any untouchables working at Dennis Oneshots Ltd. or Ocean will be busted by Eliot Ness if they attempt to enter.
- The Editor's decision is final. *(Though bribes may be considered! Ed)*
- Anyone caught trying to enter after November 30th, will be strung up. It's the only language they understand.

1)
a) ____________________
b) ____________________
c) ____________________
2) ____________________
3) ____________________

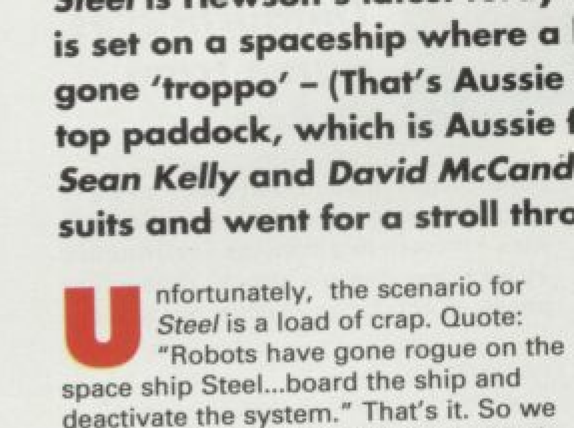
If my name is picked out of the ZERO bag I want my prize sent to:

Name ____________________
Address ____________________
Postcode ____________________

STEEL

Steel is Hewson's latest foray into the16-bit battleground and is set on a spaceship where a bunch of renegade robots have gone 'troppo' – (That's Aussie for having kangaroos in your top paddock, which is Aussie for being as mad as a hatter!). _Sean Kelly_ and _David McCandless_ donned their Metal Mickey suits and went for a stroll through the tin machine.

Unfortunately, the scenario for *Steel* is a load of crap. Quote: "Robots have gone rogue on the space ship Steel...board the ship and deactivate the system." That's it. So we bring you *'Steel: 'The ZERO Scenario.'* Eight purple cartridges, each the master of one track from the new Kylie Minogue album, have been stolen by the Society for the Propogation of Good Taste, who have hidden them within a vast spaceship. Your task, as Droid President of the Fluffy Dice And All Things Naff Preservation League, is to get the eight cartridges and place them in cartridge slots, thus allowing their transmission through the cosmoverse.



Yikes! Robbie the Robot's on the loose.

The eight purple cartridges to be collected can be found in various locations around the complex. Once found, they must be inserted into the cartridge slots, all of which are in one room. Only three can be carried at once, so completing the game is going to involve a lot of moving around in the huge flip-screen complex.

The complex is made up of a huge number of corridoors, interconnected by walkways. Mapping is, as in most arcade adventures, going to be essen-tial. This is primarily because the corridors, although there are obvious differences for each section, look very similar and tend to blend into one another after a while. Of course, chasing about and getting lost so frequently makes a big dent in the poor 'pressure cookers' reserves of fuel, but fortunately refuelling is possible.

Refuelling is done by accessing the power points to be found around the complex, although each time you collect more fuel, your score decreases. Fuel is gathered by pushing up on the joystick, while pushing down will decrease your fuel. This option seems a bit stupid to us, but it might be useful for idiots who don't know their up from down.

Think 'Hewson' and you think 'sub game', and *Steel* is no exception. Here it is – a simple shoot 'em up, which involves shooting a data bus within a set time limit. This isn't helped by the fact that rotating around it are drivers (bus drivers?) which must be blasted away before you can shoot at the bus. If the droid fails within the set time limit, then he loses some of his energy. If your shooting is more accurate than John Wayne's and you succeed, one of the Kylie cartridge slots becomes active, allowing the insertion of a cartridge. This might sound like 'une piece de urine' as the French might say, but it's not all plain sailing. Throughout the complex there are numerous droids(Ky-lingons), all programmed to obstruct you, while some fire at you and reduce your energy level too. They should make the going more difficult, but do they make *Steel* worth a trip to the local software shop to part with your dosh?

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Steel
PUBLISHER	Hewson
PRICE	£19.99
FORMAT	Atari / Amiga
RELEASED	Out now!

Sean: *Steel* is an unusual game. Initially, it's an absolute beggar to get to grips with, mainly because the instructions aren't incredibly clear. Once you've worked out that the strange things leading out of the passages are actually walkways, you realise that it's actually bigger than you thought, and it begins to open up.

The graphics are effectively de-signed, presenting a huge metallic spaceship with lots of colourful and highly detailed passages. Once you're past the nice graphics, however, *Steel* shows itself to be a fairly unremarkable 'charge-round-and-collect-things-whilst-killing-the-meanies' game.

The robot adversaries come in a large variety of shapes and sizes, but they are all frustrating. Some will bump into your droid before floating away, others will float away if you shoot at them, whilst others will indulge in a huge gunfight. Unfortunately, you can't fire your cannons and remain still, so you have to move in either direction as you fire. As you move fairly fast, you'll inevitably bump into a robot before your fire power has destroyed it. And bouncing into too many of the blighters will obviously waste time and energy.

In the end, however, they all interfere with your progress, and rather than being fun to dodge and shoot, they are a constant irritation, and can make progress incredibly slow at points.

It's fun, though, and I suspect that with its straightforward and simple gameplay it will have its fans. Person-ally, I found it a little bit too simple, and consequently not very exciting.

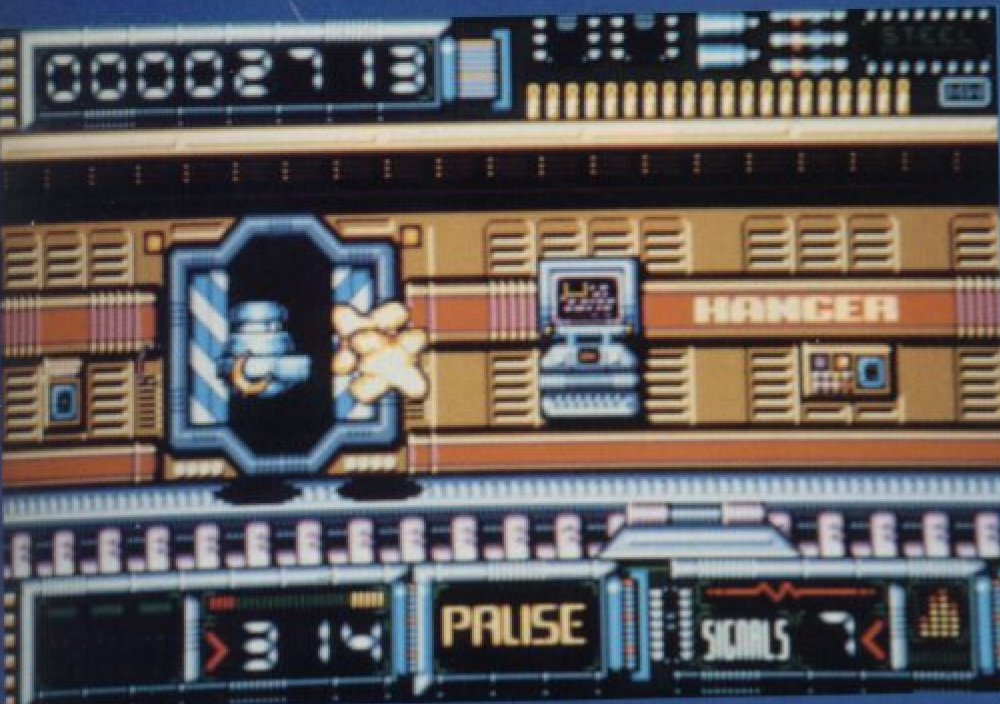
THE VERDICT

G GRAPHICS	80
S SOUND	75
A ADDICTIVENESS	60
E EXECUTION	78

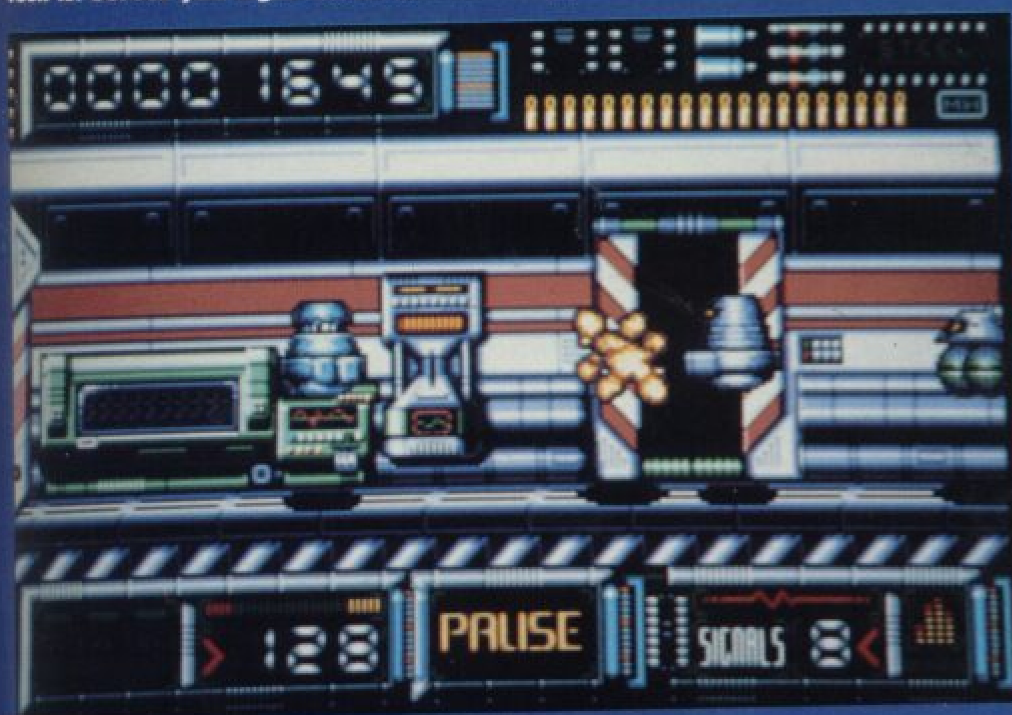
• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Nicely coloured and well animated throughout, but what Steel actually boils down to is a run of the mill arcade adventure.

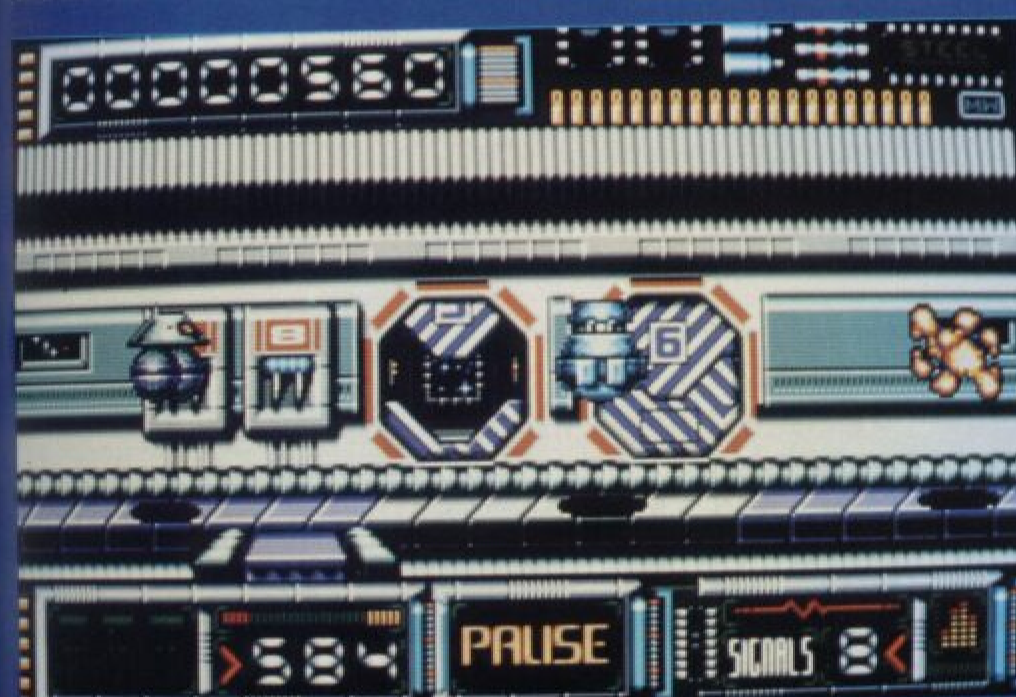
73



Explosions and mayhem galore as your droid goes on a Kylie Minogue cartridge hunt. Actually, if you are the type of person who reads the picture captions before the main copy, you will be wondering what all this 'Kylie' tosh is. Serves you right. Read the main copy!



Even more destruction, this time in the medical wing of the ship. The more poetic among you would perhaps consider this particular setting to be 'an ironic indictment of the mass destruction within an allegorically automated and inhumane world.' Personally, I've no idea what I'm talking about.



Now the more inquisitive among you may be wondering what the two stripey doors behind the droids with the number six on are for. They lead to a sub game involving camels, celery sticks and nuclear reactors. (*Tell the truth. Ed*) Er... they're just part of the scenery.

AMIGA

Macca: The guys behind *Steel* have obviously been watching their fair share of Walt Disney films (he starts cryptically). The style and setting of *Steel* owes a lot to *The Black Hole*, a prehistoric sci-fi 'epic' which featured lots of cutesy robots floating around on strings inside a spaceship caught in the grip of even more strings.

Unlike the film, *Steel* is well presented, looks good and plays well. The graphics are very good indeed. There are lots of colourful mechanical 'habitat' interiors, with suitably futuristic pipes and computer terminals, as well as beds, cupboards and doors. The central character and the other dangling robots are well-shaded and solid-looking. The attention to detail is good – the droids shift up and down slightly as they float, and their shadows drift across the floors. The sound is great, right from the funky title track to the satisfying zappy laser blast noises.

But *Steel* is much too easy. I half-completed it on my third go. The energy terminals are too widely available, the sub-game is unchallenging, and the layout of the spaceship is predictable. The only thing that is remotely difficult is controlling your robot. If you release the joystick he faces forward, so that you have to turn and move either left or right to fire in that direction. This invariably leads to a collison with the endless oncoming droids.

There's not enough challenge or depth there to keep any gamester happy for very long. It's a pity, since *Steel* could have been brilliant with perhaps a little more objects, some puzzles, and a few more ways to die.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	89
S	SOUND	92
A	ADDICTIVENESS	70
E	EXECUTION	88

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Well programmed, well drawn, well presented arcade adventure which unfortunately lacks that certain endearing element-challenge.

75

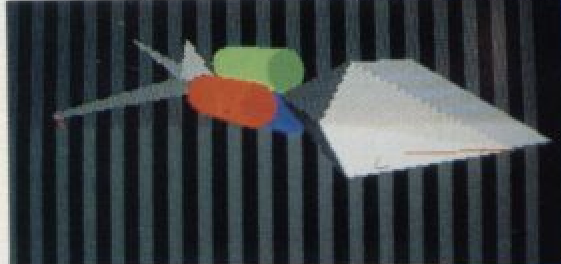

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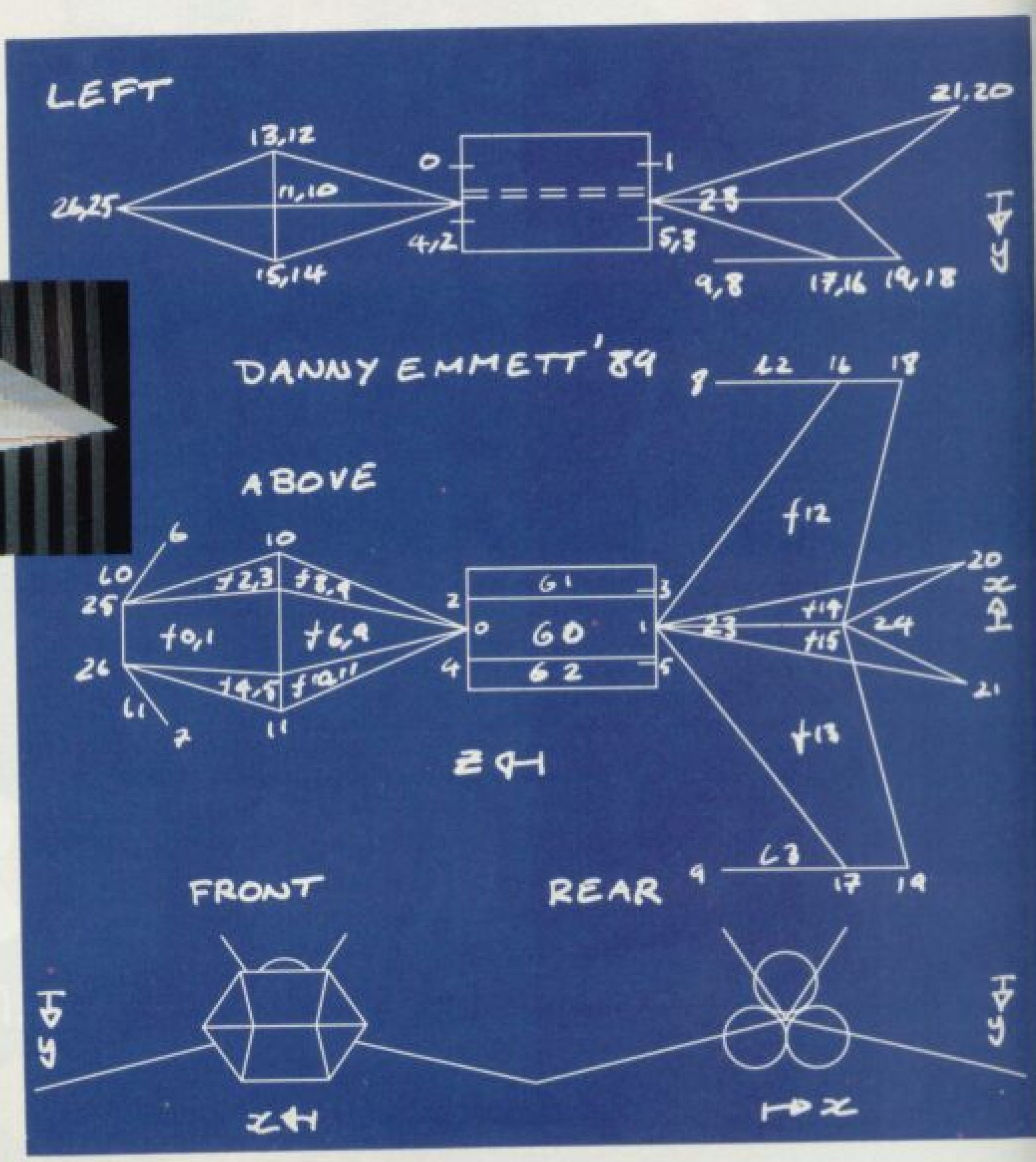
INTERPHASE

Things are boding well for Mirrorsoft this Christmas. Well anticipated and (very) well received releases like *Xenon II* and *Bloodwych* delivered a poke in the eye to their respective genres. And now *Interphase* is set to launch a kick in the face to those who thought vector-graphics games could go no further. *David McCandless* avoids all the usual 'Bristol City' gags and takes an exclusive peek-a-boo underwraps.





This is more than likely one of the bitch-muthas that'll be hassling you in-game. It was drawn blue-print style, fed through a 3-D shape editor, and then finally appears in-game, rotating missile launchers and all.





Bristol is lodged at the junction between Wales and the West Country. That's somewhere half-way between sheep gags and those classic references to 'cornish pasties' and 'clotted cream'. It's not exactly the epicentre of the 16-bit games movement, but it's the city where programmer Adrian Stephens lives and is liable to stay. And why not, since Adrian may well put Bristol on the programming map with his latest feat, *Interphase*.

***Interphase* features elements from films like *Blade Runner*, *Tron* and *Max Headroom*, all coming together as a compromise between a Neuromantic cyber-punk style and *The Twilight Zone*. The whole idea has been brought to life by game designer and project manager Dean Lester and vector graphics maestro, Danny Emmett.**

THE STORY SO FAR. . .

The plot runs as follows. Years into the future, tedious and repetitive jobs and chores are being carried out by robots and automatons. As a result the leisure industry has boomed. Entertainment is big, big (big) bucks. And the cult leisure activity is Dream Recording and DreamTracks.

DreamTracks are recorded patterns of imagination stored on CD-style disks. The technology is monopolised by massive corporations who employ a few Dreamers *(Duncan must be moonlighting. Ed)* highly imaginative individuals who can produce rich and flamboyant fantasies.

But where there's money, there's corruption. Corruption on a grand scale in this case. Politically or philosophically biased Dreamers are creating tracks that could brainwash the youth of the future. One dreamer, Chadd, unwittingly records a dream with dangerous subliminal messages – and is then immediately sacked from his job. Chadd realises his mistake and decides to steal the master-tape from the corporation's (very) high security building.

In order to do this, he sends his loyal girlfriend (sucker!) into the building while he transfers his mind (via a homemade Track Interface Inverter of course) into the security computer. He hopes to manipulate the computer and create a safe path for his 'chick' to travel through. Once she's reached the top floor, it's kleptomania time, she steals the DreamTrack and then escapes!



The title for the opening screen was designed and ray traced (giving a solid look) on the Archimedes ("lovely machine"). The image has been ported across to the ST, where a special hold-interrupt routine allows more of the usual 16 colours to be used.

THE GAME

The game starts with a tunnel sequence, representing a data line leading to the heart of the computer. It undulates up and down as well as left and right, not unlike the *Powerdrome* corridor sections. "The tunnel is basically to draw the player into the game straightaway without him having to do anything too cerebral." Successful navigation of the data-link takes you into the computer.

Several tiers of 3D printed circuit boards represent the innards of the computer. The squares you can see on the floors and ceiling are holes, leading to the next tier. Each one is littered with strange shapes like holograms that serve as "abstract representations of the workings of the computer."

The important components follow rough geometric designs, while the background graphics and nasties follow a more surrealistic route. The computer is conscious of your presence among its chips and sends a constant barrage of nasties your way. These run along the lines of jets, birds, frogs, and other fearsome contraptions. An on-board laser system helps you keep these at bay.

Clicking both mouse buttons takes you into control mode. Here you can target missiles (for destroying the larger and more persistent components), activate your tractor-beam (for snaring the faster nasties), dock with work-shops (to obtain new materials), or enter the map screen.

THE BOFFIN



For a mathematical genius and programming star, **Adrian Stephens** does not look the part. I expected an old man with a beard at least, flared brown trousers, horn-rimmed specs and a 'sculpt-3D' haircut. Adrian, much to my surprise, is young, fresh faced, and wears an Imageworks T-shirt – not a kipper tie or chequered flare in sight.

I bluntly ask, "Are you a genius?"

While Adrain chokes on his own modesty, Dean pipes up on his behalf. "He is definitely one of the forerunners in the industry."

Has he always liked vector graphics? "No, not especially. The 3D routines I'm using now were originally developed on an Amstrad CPC and then converted into faster 68000."

It seems to me that to be a programmer you need to have a gratuitous knowledge of mathematics. Just to smugly prove my point, Adrian took maths (further, applied, and pure) at 'Uni'. Has Adrian's algorithmic background rubbed off on *Interphase*?

"Yes, but you couldn't look at a piece of code and say oh, that's trigonometry or that's calculus. It's all sort of unconscious."

Adrian was first exposed to computers in a park when he encountered an ex-Navy Commodore Pet in a plastic mac. This flash of technology inspired him to buy an Acorn Atom, which was swiftly upgraded when the BBC micro first appeared. His first game was *Killer Gorilla* on the BBC, followed by *Moon Base Alpha*, *Mr.Ee*, and *Crazy Painter*. He then switched to the Amstrad CPC to program for Ocean. His leap into 16-bit programming came when he was asked to do the ST version of *Powerplay*. He hasn't looked back.



"The objects basically serve as abstract representations of the workings of the computer. Some of them are there for added visuals while others actually serve some hidden purpose."

THE ARTY-FARTY GEEZER



Danny Emmett could easily have been Salvador Dali's protégé (if Dalí wasn't dead and Danny lived in a spook house in France, wore very bright clothes, and said "Darlink" a lot). Danny's populated the *Interphase* world with the strange, weird, spooky and surreal images. A uni-cycling frog inside a computer? The design for other components came from mundane objects like Newton's Cradle, fairground rides, and of course – nature.

"Sometimes I go outside and just look at things," explained Danny. "Or I'll just get ideas from books and magazines." What sort of magazines, I began to wonder when I noticed some of the not-so-unphallic shapes the game has to offer.

"You should see the turn-table pointer!" he remarks after I comment on a comparatively tame cylindrical graphic. No thank you. Danny's imagination is given a free range. Obviously.

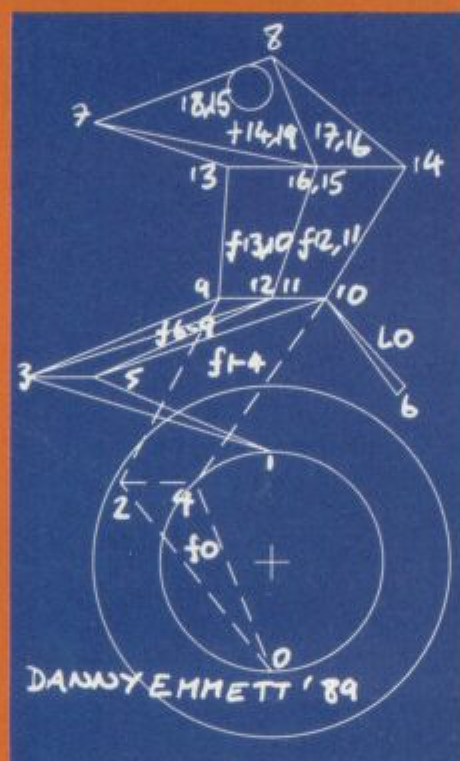
There's a big difference between a mental image and a computer image. Is there a long convoluted route between the two?

"Not really. The idea is basically either sketched or up here in my mind." He pokes at his head. "I use part paper and a lot of help from a shape editor I wrote myself [modest smile]. That's a huge utility to design, debug and edit shapes with."

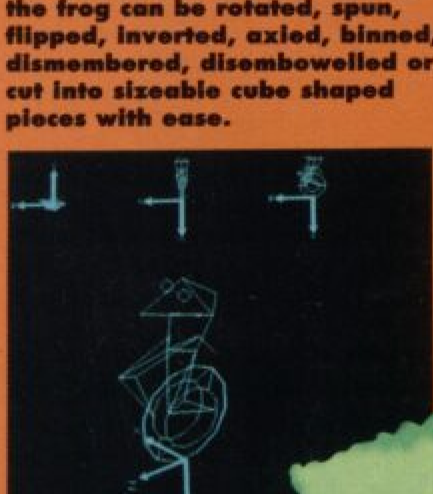
Once the shapes have been designed, the data for them is passed on to Adrian, who, in turn, transforms them into object codes. The colours and shading are added, and the whole shape placed into a motion-designer.

Computers first beckoned Danny at the cherubic age of thirteen when he was exposed to the 'revolutionary' TRS-80 with its 'revolutionary' 4K of memory. Nowadays, he designs on an ST and claims the fame for the 3D shapes in *Starglider II*. As well as *Interphase*, he's working on Electronic Arts *Aggressor* (formerly *'Hawk'* possibly *'F1-11'*, perhaps *'Aggressive Hawk'* or probably just *'The New Jez San's thingy'*).

▼A shape starts life as a Daniel Emmett sketch on graph paper, with all the measurements, faces and dimensions outlined.



▼The uni-cycling frog (for it is he) is transferred to the massive self-made 3D manipulator program on a 1040 ST with monochrome monitor (for extra clarity). Here the frog can be rotated, spun, flipped, inverted, axied, binned, dismembered, disembowelled or cut into sizeable cube shaped pieces with ease.





▶And here's the final product buoyantly careering around the *Interphase* computer entrails. The colour, solid look and 'evil eye' was added by Adrian, and any resemblance to any amphibious green hand-Muppets alive or dead is entirely coincidental.



▶The map screens display a wire-frame diagram of the level you are on. There are 12 floors, increasing in complexity and slyness. You can zoom in on any part of the level (and any part of your girlfriend) to any resolution. Hazards include security robots, electronic doors, pressure pads, and electrified floors. You have to deactivate these if your 'bird' is to get very far.

To turn off a security device, you must engage your navigation system, zip back into the computer and track down the guilty device. An arrow points you in the right direction, switching course if you over-shoot your target.

Unfortunately most problems require timing and foresight as well as an itchy trigger finger. This is when the strategy element comes in. You must plan the route before you start, and sometimes you find that a component you need has been destroyed (accidently) earlier in the game. This means you must generate a clone of the device, and then use the tractor beam to lock it into place.

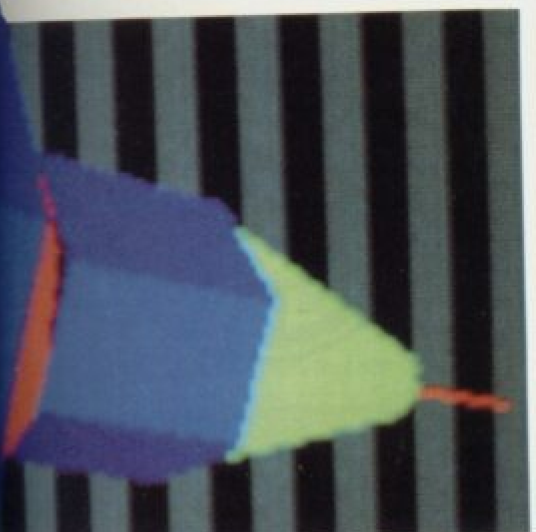
Interphase is fast. The 3D silicon jungle spins and wheels around at an alarming rate while jets and spooky shapes race across the screen, not slowing for an instant. One excellent feature is the way shapes retreat into the gloom, becoming darker and less vivid as they get further away.

TOTAL ELLIPSE OF THE HEART

Revolutionary is an easy term to bandy around when a new, good-looking game is in the offing. Does *Interphase* have anything new, anything revolutionary to offer?

"Ellipses." Ellipses? "Yes, closed conic sections formed by an inclined plane that don't cut the base of the cone," Adrian explains and then spots the bewildered look on my face. "Sort of like a flattened circle." Ah. "Nobody else has done them in a vector-graphics game before.

"Ellipses give a slightly different feel to the shapes because normally you just



have straight edges all over the place. With these you can get smoother curved edges." This new discovery paves the way for more natural looking objects, with the ability to pulsate and animate more fluidly.

Another 'revolutionary' little routine is Adrian's shading technique. Gone are the days when one side of a shape was restricted to one shade of colour. Now you can have multiple shades on one face. Wow!



▲**The innovative use of ellipses give the shape a more rounded 'natural' look and make it possible for some interesting (and possibly quite suggestive) pulsating effects.**

BACKGROUND

The plot and game idea was jointly conceived by **Simon Knight** and **Dean Lester** at Mirrorsoft. Then, when Adrian approached them with the expertise and vector-graphics system, the answer was a resounding 'yes!' Lots of big smiles, enthusiastic hand-shaking and deadlines followed.



Provisionally called *Mainframe*, the coding of the game began about a year ago. Adrian built it up using his 3D routines as a skeleton. Then, six months ago, Danny was drafted in to provide some 'stunning visuals'. Dean has over-seen his brainchild right from the start.

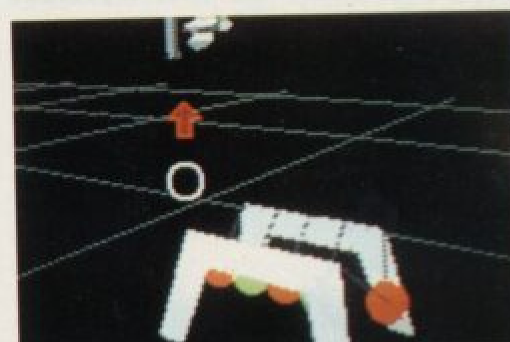
"The idea was to combine the best of arcade action with something with real strategy in it," explains Dean. "A lot of people have done 3D games before and then attempted to put some strategy in as an after-thought. We tried to get a good compromise between the two, each one complementing the other. And Adrian's system seemed the most apt for the game."

In a rare moment of intellectual inspiration, I give a short lecture on the failure of other similar games and my own personal hatred of games that are too difficult too early. You can produce all the strategy and great arcade action in the universe, but if it ain't playable, it ain't gonna be played.

Dean understands this. He draws on *Bombuzal* (an early Image Works release) as an example. "We haven't got like a 120 levels to gradually increase the difficulty. We've got a dozen levels and we have to stage this difficulty exactly right.

"We're hoping to get a *Dungeon Master* effect. People spending hours – weeks even – on one level."

So, after 70 man-weeks of hard slog, sweat and toil, how close is *Interphase*



▲**This is Newton's Cradle in its allocated spot on the PCB board. It's the kind of thing high brow executives adorn their coffee tables with if they want to add an air of intellectual gravity to the digestive dunking.**

to completion? "There are a few cosmetic changes to be done, but the logic of the game is all there – just a few weeks to get the look and feel right."

Edging towards a December release date, *Interphase* looks set to cause a few ripples (ellipses even) in the games world. I'm certain that my long and lonely Christmas nights will be spent nuking that bloody uni-cycling frog. **Ribbit!**

THE 'CHICK'



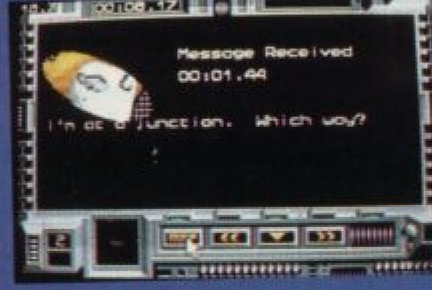
This is plan view of level two which features hazards such as turntables and pressure pads. You can zoom onto the level, much like a microfiche magnifies a microfilm. The closer you travel down the more detail is revealed.



By prior arrangement your 'chick' has been told to halt at every junction, to await orders (nice bit of male facism). This gives you breathing space to go and quickly survey the dangers of the levels.



Poised at a junction the green shape is your girlfriend. Not much of a 'looker' I know, but it's the personality that counts.



Your lady transmits a message and the security computer will intercept it, but because you're secreted in the bowels of the machine, you too can read the message.

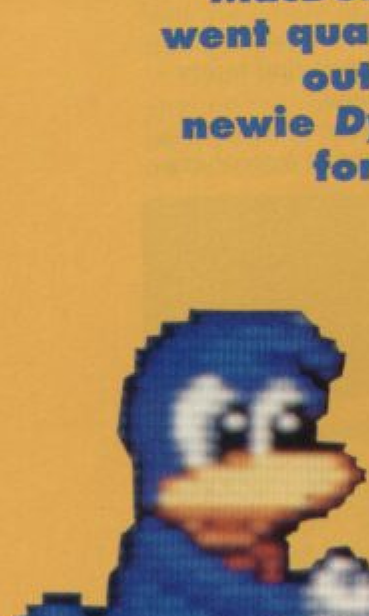
WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Interphase
PUBLISHER	Mirrorsoft
PRICE	£24.95
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	November

review

DYNAMITE DUX

Heard the one about a duck called Bin, a 'chick' called Lucy and Achacha – a dirty old wizard? Well, nor had *Duncan MacDonald* until he went quackers taking out Activision's newie *Dynamite Dux* for a waddle...



Dynamite Dux is a very large, eight way scrolling, highly colourful cartoony romp with the emphasis on 'cuteness'. You might wonder why this is? Because it's a conversion of a Sega coin-op — that's why. And we all know how twee Sega can get if left unchecked.

Anyway, the basic scenario is this: you're a duck. And you've got to rescue a 'chick' who's been kidnapped by a wizard. The wizard is called Achacha (which, as we've just discovered, is almost as easy to type as 'banana'). The 'chick' is called Lucy. Oh, and the duck's called Bin. (There's actually another duck as well, called Pin, but you only see him if you're playing in simultaneous two player mode).

ACE UP THE SLEEVE

Bin (and indeed Pin if he's there. Um, let's pretend he is) stroll across a right to left and up and down scrolling landscape, trying not to suffer the same fate as the famous Norwegian Blue duck from the Monty Python series. *(It was a parrot actually. Ed)*. To deal with the numerous highly coloured 'jolly' cartoon foes that saunter across the screen, Bin and Pin have an ace up their sleeves. The ace, in this case, is called a fist. A quick press on the fire button delivers a puny little swipe that knocks over only the weediest of nasties, while for real K.O. power you need the mega punch, which you get by keeping the fire button depressed.

As well as fists, there are numerous weapons lying around just for the taking (bombs, homing missiles, rocks, flame throwers etc), but they all have a limited lifespan and you can only carry one item at a time.

SPECIALIST NASTIES

As in the standard mould of these things, there are loads of 'specialist' nasties (i.e. big ones that take a lot of killing) scattered through (and at the ends of) the levels. So basically, what you have to do is keep on walking right, jumping when you need to jump, avoiding the myriad foes, collecting the tastier weapons and then shooting things if you can't get round them.

So what does it play like?

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Dynamite Dux
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£19.99, £24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	Out now!

AMIGA



Get on the scene (Get on up,) Like a quack machine (Get on up)...

Dunc: As I was loading *Dynamite Dux* I thought "It's funny, isn't it, how the Japanese, especially those at Sega (who did the original coin-op of this), can make every computer game sprite look like Marine Boy, what with his stupid big eyes and everything". Then the main game screen popped into view, and guess what? The duck I was controlling looked NOTHING AT ALL like Marine Boy. How wrong I had been. Sorry, Japanese people — my mistake. The graphics in *Dynamite Dux* are cartoony in a sort of 'Garfield' fashion (sort of, I said): a cursory glance at the screens should serve you here — 'a picture paints a thousand words' etc.

What a picture *doesn't* paint however, is how the animation feels — how things move. Um, and I've got quite a good word for this actually. Here it is... "slowly". Things chug along at a picoscopic rate of knots. I found myself wrenching the joystick really hard to the side to try and wring a bit of extra speed out of 'Bin' (the name of the duck you control), but, alas, it didn't work.



The road winds about all over the shop with sections where there's more than one possible way to go. Each route has it's own pros and cons regarding the number and power of the adversaries you'll meet of which there are squillions all told, and every one of them is cuter than the one that went before.

Now — what I actually think about *Dynamite Dux. (About time. Ed)*. It's an excellent coin-op conversion. Core (the programming house responsible) has done a great job. The only trouble is that the arcade machine itself was a bit boring, so a conversion could only (at its best) be a bit boring too. I've got nothing at all against 'cutesy' games, just so long as there's some pace involved. Unfortunately, pace is something that *Dynamite Dux* doesn't have. Like quite a few other Sega games, things in *D.D.* sort of limp along — and the collision detection is a bit squiffy as well.

If you adore games that bob along in a slightly geriatric way, mildly surreal but lovable animal sprites and you don't mind being killed by something that looked as if it didn't touch you, then you'll be happy with this offering from Activision — it'll keep you occupied for ages. It's certainly pretty enough and hard enough. However, if it's a sweaty joystick handle you're after then it might be wise to give this one a miss.

THE VERDICT

- G GRAPHICS 81
- S SOUND 72
- A ADDICTIVENESS 65
- E EXECUTION 75

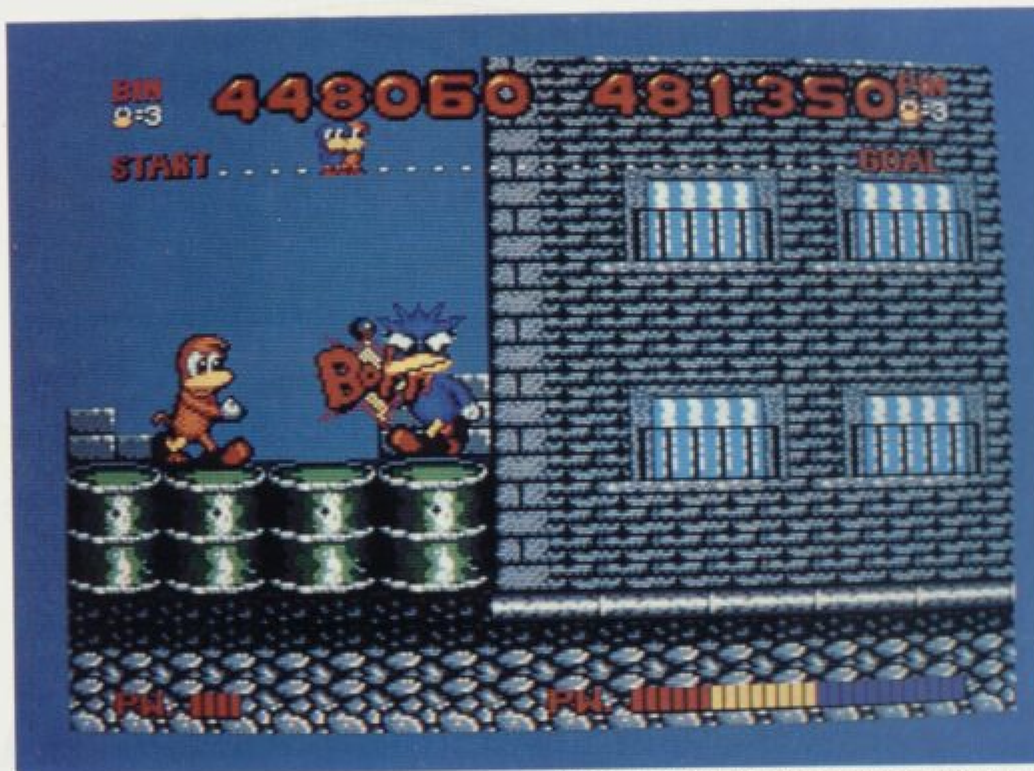
• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Dynamite Dux is a cutesy pseudo 3-D scrolling cartoony beat 'em up really. But it's all a bit too sedate and samey to really grab everyone by the, erm, 'thingies'.

72

Hey! It's the Dynamite Dux Dancing Duo. Cue James Brown music: one, two, three, four...Get down (Get on up), Get down (Get on up)...





You can tell by the way I move my walk I'm a woman's duck (no time to talk)... (*Wrong track. Ed*)

Matt: Sega's coin op *Dynamite Dux* would seem to have a lot going for it. It's a bright (sickeningly) cute, slightly bizarre cartoon beat 'em up. And I really like cute, slightly bizarre coin ops. Ergo, I'll like the Amiga *Dynamite Dux*, won't I? Um, well no actually. Not really. Let me explain.

Why do cute coin-ops work? It's because they're so playable isn't it? And as far as I'm concerned the word 'playable' is directly interchangeable with the word 'platforms-and-ladders, jumping-up-and-down, nipping-through-secret-doorways, leaping-ravines-and-generally-bouncing-about-all-over-the-place.' It's not directly interchangeable with the word 'waddling-along-the-street-punching-things-and-um-that's-it.' And that's all you really get to do in *Dynamite Dux*.

Still, let's look on the positive side. The graphics are universally bright and glossy and clear, and some of the animal designs are a real treat. Moose heads bound towards you just aching tc be punched, pigs trundle along on trolleys and boxing kangaroos sproing around like manic Zebedees. Bin and Pin are neat little sprites too, apart from the fact that a) they look just like Woody Woodpecker (especially the orange one), b) they walk forward slightly faster than their feet move (I'm always whinging about this in computer games) and c) when they do the twisty-spinny-Popeye-arm-megapunch they have to stand still to land it, which slows things down a bit.

What Activision has got here then — and it's more a fault of the original coin-op than its quite professional conversion — is a graphically cute and varied cartoon beat 'em up with a lot of instant appeal, but not much lasting gameplay. I mean, a beat 'em up with only two combat moves! (The thrilling stand right in front of the baddy and punch him, and the equally exciting stand a few feet a way and throw something at him.) It's just not cricket! (It keeps you enthralled for about as long though.)

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
Once it's loaded you're away - though we did have a bit of a problem accessing two player mode. (Just put it down to the fact that we're crap.)

The other thing it's managed to come up with is a game that's almost identical on the ST and the Amiga — there's only really the music to tell them apart. And luckily the Amy soundtrack is nothing short of awesome. Oops, did I say awesome? I meant annoying. It's loud, jolly and very, very obnoxious indeed. Ten out of ten for that, then.

THE VERDICT

- G GRAPHICS 85
- S SOUND 72
- A ADDICTIVENESS 60
- E EXECUTION 75

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A pretty, cute little cartoon beat 'em up that looks great for the first half hour, but is almost totally free of playability.

71

ARTIFACTS

Eat your Hart out Tony! *Alan Tomkins*, the man who put the Pee in er.. pixels, is here to show you how to become a master artist without cutting off your left ear!

As this is the first issue of ZERO I thought I'd take time out to briefly tell you what Artifacts will be rapping on about in the months to come. First and foremost we'll be reviewing all the new art packages and telling you if they're worth shelling out for. We'll also be showing you how to use a Genlock, but not how to pay for it. You'll learn how to edit your home videos, (but remember to keep them clean or else I'll want to see them), as well as how to use digitizers and repaint the images produced so you can show your latest girlfriend *(Or boy-friend! Non-sexist Ed)* your etchings. Remember, after sliding one of those into the side of your machine you'll really impress them with the size of your equipment.

You'll be shown from scratch, just how to draw on a computer, including Ray Traced 3-D images, so that after a few months you'll be wrapping your fingers around your mouse and really performing.

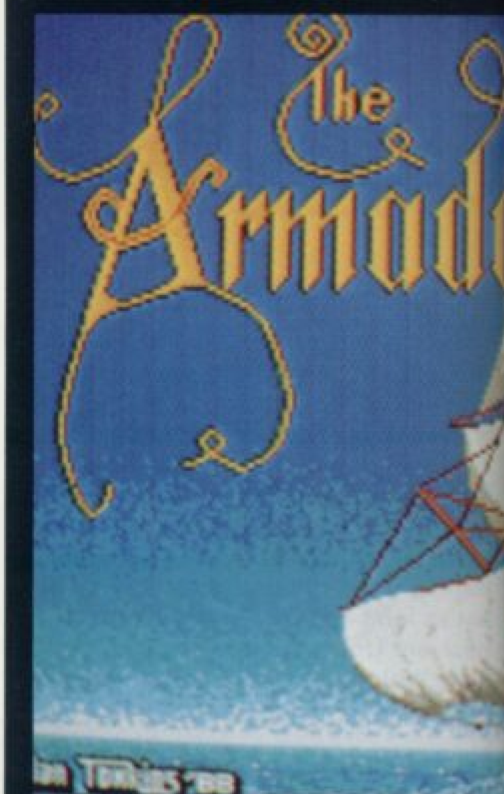


Alan Tomkins

Graphic artists are the great unknowns of the games industry, so in the coming months I'll also be running up and down the length of the country to interview top and up and coming arty geezers, (and one day I might just get expenses, so I can let the train take the strain).

I'll also be giving you a step-by-step guide to how the graphics for a new game are created, (but don't put me out of a job just yet, 'cause I need the dosh).

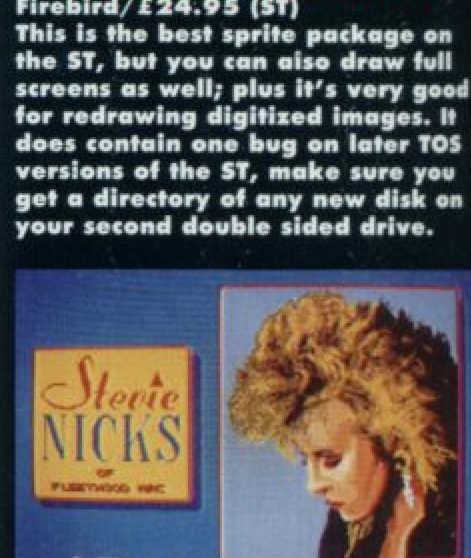
Cue *Vision On* music... 'cos there'll also be *The Gallery,* the bit where you can send in all your pictures and win a prize if yours is the best. But remember, we can't return your pictures without a stamped addressed envelope. And don't forget your tips for creating pictures either. Also if you've had problems with a package let me know and I'll help you iron them out. So start sending your pictures and letters in now! (I'm a philanderer, philater.. philipi.. I need the stamps!) To kick off this month here's a rundown of my favourite art packages.



▲ **DEGAS ELITE**
Electronic Arts £24.95 (ST)
Currently the best buy on the ST, it has the best zoom and text mode, but it has a bad bug. When you hit ESC to cut and paste it sometimes crashes. Apart from this, if you only draw now and again, this is the package to go for.



▼ **ADVANCED ART STUDIO**
Firebird/£24.95 (ST)
This is the best sprite package on the ST, but you can also draw full screens as well; plus it's very good for redrawing digitized images. It does contain one bug on later TOS versions of the ST, make sure you get a directory of any new disk on your second double sided drive.





▼PHOTON PAINT II
Electric Dreams £89.95 (Amiga)
This is the *Deluxe Paint III* of the HAM mode, a truly wonderful package, it comes with a great zoom mode plus bend, blend, wrap and much more. If you've never drawn in HAM mode try *Photon Paint II*, you'll like it.



▼ART DIRECTOR
Mirrorsoft/£49.95 (ST)
The advanced package for the ST, it has bend, wrap and the best rescale on the ST. The thing that lets it down is its zoom mode, the pointer moves far too slowly. If *Art Director* had *DEGAS's* zoom mode then nothing could touch it, but it's still a great buy.



ALAN TOMKINS INTERVIEWS... ER ALAN TOMKINS

Nobody knows more about me than me 'cos I've known me all my life, well apart from me mum, so I decided who better to tell you about me than me! *(Eh? Ed)*

Alan: Well now, tell me Alan how long have you been resident on this planet?
Alan: "I always thought that it was a woman's privilege to withhold her age?"
Alan: But you don't look like a woman.
Alan: "Thank you; well I'm a 43 year old Scorpio, and an Anglo-Scot ; I moved from Edinburgh down to Sommers Town in London's Kings Cross, when I was five. I went to the Richard Cobden Infants School and the Burghley Junior School when I was 11." *(Get on with it! Ed.)*
Alan & Alan: "Sorry!"
Alan: What were your best subjects?
Alan: "Well I hated Maths and English, but loved Art, History and Science. It was great at a new school 'cos it came ready supplied with girls!"

"School came ready supplied with girls!"

Alan: Everybody likes to think that they went to school with somebody famous, how about you?
Alan: "Johnny Hall, *(Who he? Ed)* the drummer of *The Equals* was in my class and was one of my best friends. And in another class, in the same year, was Eddie Grant who was lead singer of *The Equals* and who later went solo."
Alan: Claim to fame, eh? What did you do when you left school?
Alan: "I moved into music. For the 1959 School Dance I set up two record players in the hall, because I was the only one with a good record collection."
Alan: I suppose they were Rock & Roll records?
Alan: "A few were, but I liked R&B records that weren't released over here, so I had to go to bootleg import shops. By 1960 there were a lot of people who were into R&B and buying smart clothes from the Kings Road. This was how the Mod movement started."
Alan: Don't tell me you were a mod!?
Alan: "Yeah, I used to get on my scooter and go to Chelsea away games and all the other supporters would laugh at my clothes."

"Other supporters would laugh at my clothes"

Alan: What happened then?
Alan: "In 1965 I moved to Los Angeles for three months, then came back to Swiss Cottage in Hampstead, where I still live. I started to DJ at The El Toro Discotheque."
Alan: Were you into taking drugs?
Alan: "The only drugs about in them days were pep pills nicked from Boots and grass, none of them killers like drugs today. I can't for the life of me understand why people today take drugs."
Alan: Music is a big part of your life, tell us who your favourites are?
Alan: "My favourite record in the fifties was The Isley Brothers' original version of *Shout.* Acts I liked included The Isley Brothers, The Olympics, The Drifters, Fats Domino and all the New York Doo Wop groups.

"My favourite record from the Sixties was again by The Isley Brothers - their version of The Top Notes' *Twist And Shout.* But my main man was Phil Spector, producer of The Ronettes, Righteous Brothers and Tina Turner."
Alan: Who are your current favourites?
Alan: "Well my taste in music is slowly changing towards Rock 'cos while I like House Music, I really hate Rap. So I would say Stevie Nicks, Cindy Lauper, Kate Bush and Tom Petty."
Alan: What about the movies?
Alan: "My all time favourite movie is *Bladerunner.*"
Alan: Hem, well what about sport?
Alan: "Apart from Chelsea I'm a Ferrari fanatic and go to as many Grand Prix as I can. I also own 43 Ferraris - but can't get into any of them as they're all models."
Alan: Who are your favourite drivers?
Alan: "My all time favourites are Count Von Tripps, who was leading the World Championship with two races to go but unfortunately was killed at Monza in 1961 when Jim Clark drove into him, and Gilles Villeneuve, the greatest attacking driver ever, who was killed in Germany."
Alan: So how did you get involved in art?
Alan: "Well around 1966 I started to air brush car and van bodies, but people who crashed their motors a lot couldn't afford to have their


II
F-15
STRIKE EAGLE
II
SUPER
3-D
GRAPHICS
F15 Strike Eagle II
F15 Strike Eagle II is a whole new concept in computer air warfare. Dogfighting is the name of the game. The air swarms with enemy aircraft. Dice with death as you light your burners and head for the skies. Success depends on making the right moves – fast. Super smooth, non-stop action takes place over 250,000 square miles of authentic terrain. Superb, solid-filled polygon-based 3D graphics makes it feel as though you really are in the thick of the action. Hundreds of options, four difficulty levels and a vast amount of missions and scenarios make F15 Strike Eagle II perfect for dogfighting veterans and novices alike.
MICRO PROSE
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NEOCHROME
Atari £29.95 (ST)
Neo was *the* standard art package on the ST until *DEGAS* came along.
It gives you all the standard tools you need and I like the way you can toggle the menu over your picture. When *Neo* first came out it was the cream of the crop, today I would say it's still the best basic package.



CYBER PAINT
Electric Dreams £69.95 (ST)
Another advanced package for the ST, *Cyber* comes with a very good sequence mode for animations, but is very memory hungry and it's a very tight fit on 520's. Once again the zoom mode is slow, but *Cyber* can load and save in *Neo, DEGAS,* and IFF. A very useful package.



DELUXE PAINT III
Electronic Arts £69.95 (Amiga)
If you do a lot of graphics on the ST, then you'll know that to get the best you need at least four different packages. On the Amiga all you need is *Deluxe Paint III*, it has virtually everything bar multiple screens, and this latest version also has animation.



ZOETROPE
Electric Dreams £69.95 (Amiga)
The Amiga version of *Cyber Paint*, this package is great for creating and displaying full screen animations both short and long. You'll have hours of fun with this package.

panels redone, so I moved into photography and did so many weddings I got bored. So I moved to Belfast and took pictures for *The Mirror* and *Express.*

"By 1970 though, it was a sad fact that a Protestant born Cockney wasn't wise to stay in the Catholic part of Belfast, so I came back to Swiss Cottage."

"I also own 43 Ferraris but can't get into them!"

Alan: So what did you do then?

Alan: "I drove a Post Office van around Kentish Town on two wheels for a while, then went back into music where I produced a few more records and got a Silver Disc in Italy with an Italian group called The Bridge. *(Who? Ed)*

"Then I drove a No.16 bus out of Cricklewood Garage and later became a Tax Inspector."

"Then I drove a No.16 bus out of Cricklewood "

Alan: When did you get into computers?

Alan: "I bought a ZX 81 when it first came out, then a Spectrum and later upgraded to a BBC Micro, but I didn't do any real art work until 1985 when I bought an ST."

Alan: How did you get into doing Computer Graphics for a living then?

Alan: "Well I did a few pictures using *Neochrome* and then met Errol Elison who ran the Selfridges branch of Silica Shop. He saw them, and put them on display. Later he started to write a game and asked me to do the graphics for him. This game was called *Foundations Waste* and has just been reissued on the US Gold Klassix label.

"I did so many weddings I got bored"

"I then went to the 1987 PC Show and went the rounds. I did *Paperboy* for Elite which should be out now. I then started to freelance mainly for Probe Software, but have worked with Softek on *Raffles*, Eidersoft on *Quantum Paint*, the SAM Digitizer and with Software Horizons on *Mafdet* and *Veteran*, plus a new release for Atari called *Atari Grand Prix*, among lots of others."

Alan: What games have you worked on with Probe software?

Alan: "*Trantor, Solomon's Key, 1943, Roadblasters, OutRun Amiga, OutRun Europa, Tiger Road, Savage* and *Mr Heli* among others.

"The team at Probe work very well with each other. They're a very friendly bunch of people, and most importantly there is no bitchiness or back biting, just a very professional bunch of people."

Alan: Graphically what would you consider to be your best game?

Alan: "You shouldn't ask me things like that - we're too modest. But for self designed graphics I would say *Foundations Waste*. As for arcade conversions I think the new release from Firebird, *Mr Heli*, is most like the original arcade ."

Alan: Which computer do you think is best, the Amiga or ST?

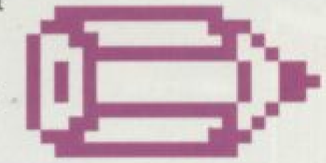
Alan: "I see, catch question time is it? Okay let's go then, for graphics alone it has to be the Amiga but I hate its operating system, it's so bloody slow! The ST is much more efficient to work on. I get hold of an STE in two weeks time so I may change my opinion, but the ST for sixteen colours is still a very good buy if you have limited funds.

"On the games front I go for the Amiga again, as when games are written for the Amiga and not just ported across from the ST, their graphics and sound are really wild, even though they tend to be slower than the ST versions.

"For sampling it's again the Amiga with it's stereo sound, or rather, panned mono. But for midi control then the ST is the winner. For Word Processing, Data Bases, Spread Sheets and DTP the ST is again the clear winner.

"So which would I choose out of the two? My first reaction is to go for the Amiga, but as an all round workhorse I'll plump for the ST.

"What I can't understand is all those poseurs who write into magazines, slagging off all and sundry who don't have the same machine as they do. Who really cares anyway? Enjoy the machine you've got and stop worrying about the Joneses."



Alan: Well I reckon you sound like a pretty good bloke!

Alan: "Thanks so do I."

DRAW TO A CLOSE

So there you have it, my favourite art packages for both machines. Don't forget, to get the best out of any package you must first sit down with the manual and learn how to use it. You'd be surprised how many of you out there never read manuals, so you never get the full use of the package you've just spent loads of moolah on. And don't forget to be kind to mice. *(Eh? Ed)* See you next month! Oh, and I nearly forgot, if you've got any works of art, scribbles or hints and tips, then send them to Alan Tomkins (that's me) Artifacts, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

FUTURE WARS

TIME TRAVELLERS



CINÉMATIQUE™: A Brand New Standard in Computer Games

CONSOLE ACTION

ATARI VCS
KONIX
NINTENDO
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SEGA

INSIDE

New game controller from Sega

Bikers and Camels for Konix

No more smart cards for Sega systems

Nintendo go for all coin-op licences

PC Engine smart cards pirated

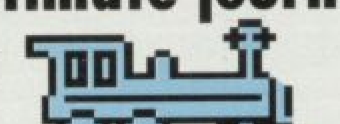
Palm-top technology from Atari

Plus news, reviews, hints and tips



KONIX KORKER

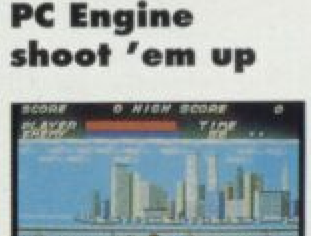
Experience the ultimate journey into realism with the Multi-System



REVIEWED



GUNHED
The greatest PC Engine shoot 'em up



VIGILANTE
Stalk the streets with Sega's latest



The business... OIL ., The challenge...
..POWER., The rewards... THE WORLD
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MAKE IT BIG

Welcome, console cravers, to the first edition of *Console Action* – the magazine within a magazine devoted entirely to the colossal world of consoles. There's something for every machine, be it an Atari VCS or a Sega Megadrive.

But why *Console Action*? Because there's been a recent upsurge in demand for the ultimate in home entertainment. Consoles, and only consoles, can deliver the sort of escapism that you and me are after. If you don't believe that the console's day has dawned then consider this:

- *Rampage* on the Sega has recently stormed to the number two slot in the home micro-dominated Gallup full-priced software charts. A remarkable achievement that will doubtless happen again and again.
- Nintendo is still crowing about the phenomenal success of *Super Mario Brothers*. Will it ever stop selling? Probably not.
- The PC Engine and Sega Megadrive have convinced the Japanese and Americans that the arcade has finally made it into the home. Check out the *Gunhed* review yourself.
- Konix's Multi-System has brought a whole new dimension of gameplaying into the home – that of reality. You can now feel the game, interact with it and become part of it almost.
- Both Atari and Nintendo have gone still further – they've managed to shrink entertainment down into something that will fit into the palm – with the Lynx and Gameboy respectively.

Still need convincing...?

Enough! Tuck into this issue and get those letters rolling.

This is your magazine, so if there's something you want to read about, write in and tell us about it. There's also a section devoted to gameplaying tips and cheats so if you know of any then send them in. It could earn you some of the latest releases. Get to it. Write to Richard Monteiro, *Console Action*, ZERO, Dennis Publishing, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

NO KONIX FROM SANTA

Konix Multi-System unlikely before next year

Although Konix recently demonstrated its new Multi-System – and a range of near-finished software titles for the console – to a multitude of computer journalists, it's not expected to go on sale until after Christmas.

Besides the basic console unit, there is a powered chair and a range of add-on accessories that will turn the console into the ultimate home entertainment system. The Multi-System is split into several sections with the main console unit and the powered chair selling separately for £220 each. The basic console will be competing directly with the likes of the Sega Megadrive, which also incorporates 16-bit technology, and the PC Engine. The Konix console has an 8086 processor and dedicated hardware for scrolling, graphics and sound. See the Konix feature further on for more details.

It's looking decidedly unlikely that Konix will be in a position to sell its Multi-System in time for Christmas because there are still modifications that need to be implemented. Even the developers don't have the full system, but have to make do with just the basic console unit.

The modifications still to be made to the Konix system include redesigning the control pillar. At present it's not robust enough to take the kind of hammering that serious game players will dish out. There are also likely to be some problems getting the system approved for release. At present the pitch of the chair as it moves close to the floor means that the family cat would be squashed if sleeping underneath. All such problems must be ironed out before release, so it looks like anyone trying to purchase it in time for Christmas may well be disappointed.

Konix had intended to mount an intensive advertising campaign between October and Christmas to make everyone aware of the Multi-System and its potential. The slogan "Experience the Reality" was to be used throughout the campaign, but due to problems with supply the campaign has been withdrawn and will not be run until next year. Michael Baxter of Solution PR who is handling distribution of the Konix Multi-System insists that "tens of thousands of units are available to meet demand from consumers who hear about the Multi-System from alternative sources." However, the potential sales from a massive television and newspaper advertising campaign would exceed demand and Konix does not wish to keep customers waiting for the product.



Are you sitting comfortably? Well, now we'll begin... Jerk... aaarrrgh!... help...

PIRATE POWER

Having ripped off the 8-bit and 16-bit home-computer markets left, right and centre, pirates are now turning their attention towards consoles. Pirated copies of Nintendo and PC Engine cartridges are circulating in Britain and are being sold as legitimate copies.

Piracy is big business and it appears as though pirates have found ways of copying the ROM chips inside console cartridges for distribution worldwide. Clever far-Eastern companies have succeeded in ripping off PC Engine and Nintendo games using cheap gadgets which can copy ROMs, but most worrying of all is the way these same gadgets are beginning to circulate in the UK.

The copying devices work by reading data from the game ROMs into a home computer's memory. The master ROM is removed from the unit and replaced by a blank EPROM (electrically programmable read-only memory). The data stored in memory is then written back out to the new chip. The problem comes in designing a cartridge unit that will plug into the relevant console and support the EPROM. But for persistent pirates that is soon overcome.

In the UK, PC Engine Services has been known to be selling illegitimate copies of PC Engine games. Until a few weeks ago it was distributing pirated copies of *Tiger Heli*. According to boss Robert Zengalli, the reason for this pursuit was that official copies had "run out." With software for the PC Engine and consoles in general being relatively difficult to obtain, pirates could make a killing selling games at whatever price they thought they could get away with.

Nintendo says it will prosecute anyone who copies its cartridges. But tracking down the culprits will be a mammoth task – particularly when they're usually small operators working from a back room in Hong Kong.

news

NATIONAL SEGA COMPETITION

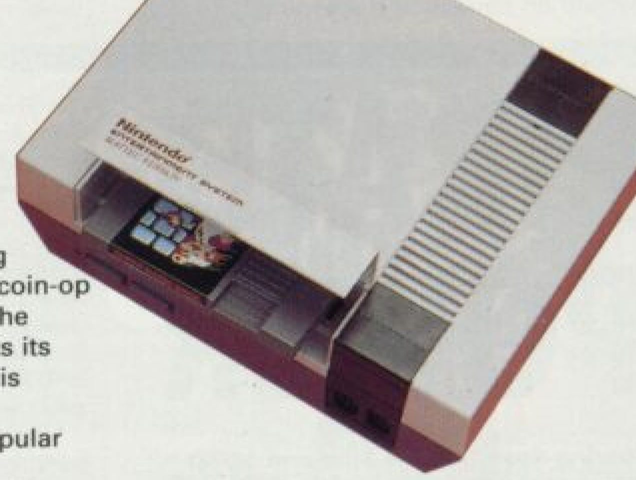


In mid-October Virgin Mastertronic will start the National Sega competition in conjunction with Youth Club UK. The idea is to give the Sega console a high profile in the lead up to Christmas. The competition will be open to all.

Regional competitions will be organised throughout the country at various clubs where a Sega console will be provided for play. The games likely to be used in the competitions have yet to be decided, but Mastertronic is trying to find a game which will appeal to the entire age range from 8-16, that can be played within 15 minutes. Lesley Walker, Mastertronic's PR manager told *Console Action*, "In the end we'll probably go for a shoot 'em up since they appeal to everyone. We might also decide to split the competition into two age groups to make things fair."

Winners of the regional finals will go forward to the semi-finals and then the finals, due to be held early next year. The competition will be supported by a national television advertising campaign.

NINTENDO THREATENS COIN-OP MARKET



There are fears among the big software houses that major coin-op titles could disappear from the shelves altogether if Nintendo gets its way. The Japanese console giant is believed to be looking at ways of securing exclusive rights to all popular arcade games.

If this happens then it's believed Nintendo would reserve all the best licences for its own console system and thus tie up the market totally. Nintendo would almost certainly insist that no other versions could appear on other consoles or home computers. This move would force gamers to buy the Nintendo system if they wanted to enjoy any of the major arcade games. Nintendo has to be careful, however, not to overstep European fair trading laws; naturally Nintendo is keeping a low profile at the moment. More news as it happens.

QUICKIES

SEGA GET SMART

There are plans afoot to scrap the Sega smart cards, which have been around for years, and replace them with cartridges. The cartridges have been outselling smart cards for a while now as Mastertronic's Lesley Walker explained, "The smart card is easily broken, particularly by youngsters. Younger kids have even been known to take bites out of the card – not healthy for the child or the game!" All other forthcoming games will appear on cartridge only priced around £14.95.

ATARI INTO PALMISTRY



Atari's Sam Tramiel: "We have revolutionised palm-top technology."

NINTENDO GO QUIET

Nintendo is keeping very quiet about its forthcoming release schedule, refusing to go into detail on any of its proposed releases. Nevertheless, *Console Action* can reveal that by Christmas four new titles will make their way onto the market. These will be *Ikari Warriors*, *Gunsmoke*, *Ghosts And Goblins* and *Trojan*. All should be released by Christmas. *Ikari Warriors* is a conversion of the coin-op smash in which two players waste hordes of attacking enemy troops. *Ghosts And Goblins*, another Elite hit, is an arcade adventure in which the player runs around avoiding and killing ghouls.

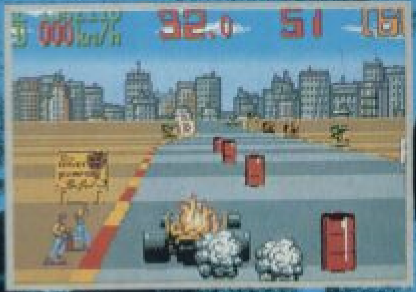
YOU MUST BE YOKING

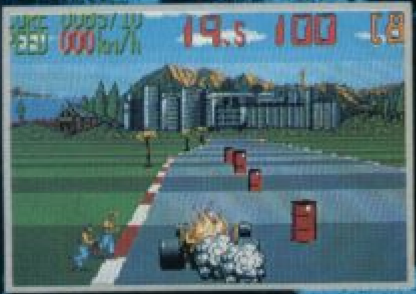
In a bid to compete with the forthcoming Konix Multi-System, Virgin Mastertronic is bringing out a yoke which will plug into the Sega console and provide a driving peripheral armed with fire buttons. The price of the yoke is yet to be decided, but around £40 seems likely.

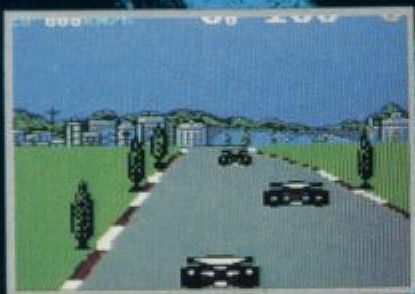
It's already possible to purchase yokes for the Sega console from alternative sources, but at present there are no Sega-branded devices available. If the Multi-System cannot be produced in mass quantities before Christmas then Sega is likely to grab a major lead in the console market. The Sega yoke also has the advantage that it's compatible with the 16-bit Megadrive.

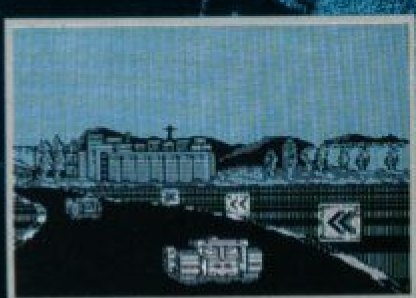
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

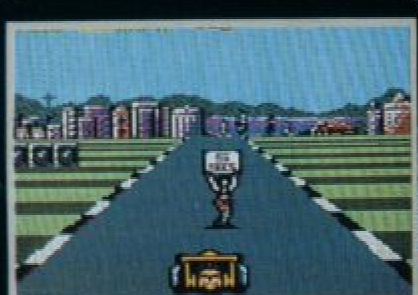



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CHEAT!

Your indispensable guide to underhand gameplaying:

CHAN AND CHAN
PC Engine
Halfway through the last level of world 1, a bridge appears just as a group of birds fly overhead. Walk over the bridge, turn and kick as many bricks as possible. Fall down the hole and you'll bounce back to the top of the screen to reappear in a secret warp zone, where levels 2, 3 or 4 can be entered at will.

R-TYPE
PC Engine
Enter JJL-6589-MB as the mission code to gain maximum equipment and loads of lives.

SHINOBI
Sega
When the title screen appears, push diagonally while pressing button two and select level to start on.

SUPER MARIO BROS.
Nintendo
If you lose all your Mario's, press the start button while holding down the A button. You'll now be able to start on level one of the last world you reached. However, you only get another three Marios.

SPACE HARRIER
Sega
If three lives aren't enough to complete the mission then, at the 'Game Over' prompt, press the control up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, down, up, down, up. The game restarts with another three lives. This can be done continuously.

THUNDERBLADE
Sega
When approaching the end-of-level fortress, move up to either top corner and sit there. The fortress will blow up without you having to touch it.

THE LATEST GAMES UP FOR GRABS
Send in your gameplaying tips, maps, tactics, or cheat codes and you could win the hottest software releases for your machine. If you get your underhand tricks published then you get the latest games for your console.
Send your secrets to *Cheat!, Console Action*, ZERO, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. Don't forget to state which machine you own.

GUNHED

CLASSIC

Hudson Soft/£34.99/PC Engine

The ultimate in vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups? You bet! *Gunhed* isn't just some two-bit conversion of an arcade game, it's an original and it's more addictive than any coin-op. You control a ship which can be directed around the screen as you progress forwards through one level after another of violent arcade action. One of the best features of the game is the bolt-on weaponry which is picked up by moving your craft over special icons that appear either at opportune moments or after blasting away the aliens, and boy are extra weapons necessary. They don't just make life a little easier, they're damned near essential if you're going to get anywhere.

The whole thing moves so fast that you're just not going to survive unless you have the neural responses of an entire SAS team and the intellect of a ham sandwich – 'cos there's absolutely no time to think.

Coin-op quality graphics and impressive sound accompany the amazingly playable game. Extra weapons provide some of the greatest visual treats you are ever likely to see. Laser power snakes around the screen, damaging shields, erupting in sonic waves and firepower leaps around the playing area like there's no tomorrow. At the end of each level you meet massive aliens like giant spiders and brains. Without winding your way around monsters like this and firing constantly, you'll never progress onto the next level.

Sprites vary drastically in design and size, some move fast whilst others are just obstacles. Some split into two and then four and then eight while others meet up and form a massive creation which has to be blasted.



Laser power is the only way you'll survive in this game.

All in all, it's the type of shoot 'em up which demonstrates the amazing power of the PC Engine, and it's certainly proved that even *R-Type* just scratched at the surface. A must for any shoot 'em up freak.

THE VERDICT

G S A E (scale to 100)

A definite must for the shoot 'em up addict.

91

VIGILANTE

Virgin/Mastertronic/£24.99/Sega

With an "eeeeeekkk" Maria is mauled by the merciless muggers known as the Rogues and carted off to the seedy side of the city. Putting on your Charlie Bronson cap you take it upon yourself to rescue this fair damsel from the dirty dozen (well, perhaps several hundred dozen).

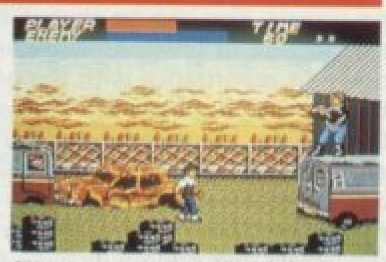
First stop is the main street where you meet a grisly selection of sleeze balls like Chokehold, Mo-Head and Wild Wacko who are out for blood. Only way to win is to hit them hard and fast before they kick, punch, stab, slash, throttle, or shoot you. With only your fists and feet as weapons things are definitely not looking up for you. As you progress through the levels, you can pick up nunchakus which are very effective against any opponent. But they're easily lost if you're attacked by several thugs at once.

After wading through a plethora of unpleasants, you get to the end-of-level boss. Dispose of him and you're through to the next round, only to be told that Maria has been whisked off elsewhere.

In all there are shady areas of the city to visit: main street, junkyard, Brooklyn bridge, downtown and a construction site. Naturally, as you progress, the nefarious rogues get more prolific and much nastier.

Three lives and an energy bar that depletes faster than hot air balloons in Adelaide are not enough to guarantee you a safe journey through the scum-infested streets. So, thank you Sega, for including a continue-from-last-position option. It means you'll get to see all of *Vigilante* – eventually.

Visually, the beat 'em up is excellent. Still screens display a tormented Maria between each level and this adds a great sense of purpose to the game. Backdrops throughout are detailed without being overbearing and each of the characters has a personality of its own. The only real grumble is the animation; many of your opponents look as though they're skating.



Your mate Maria. She's why you stalk the streets.

Get out there and give the rogues a rough time. You'll not regret it.

THE VERDICT

G S A E (scale to 100)

Plenty of action, plenty of screens, plenty to do!

84

CLOSE TO REALITY

Cavort with motorbikes, avoid bridges, blast aliens, sail on a gentle ocean sea. Snuggle up to reality because the ultimate games machine has arrived. The Konix Multi-System is not just a new console, but the beginning of a new era. It provides an interactive environment like none other available presently in the home computer market; the moment you set eyes on the Multi-System you'll understand why.

The Ultimate Environment

There isn't a joystick or hand controller, but a steering wheel, or handlebars, or yoke – you mould the machine to suit your gameplaying needs.

The system is shaped like a giant W with one bar of the W supporting the monitor and the other housing the chair. In between both is a spindle upon which the control pillar resides. It's this which incorporates the console, the drive unit and the controller.

The Konix Multi-System is on the verge of being released. *Mary Doran* looks at the technology and the games about to be released for it.

With the system up and running, the power chair can be made to move under software control. So, the chair can mirror what's happening on-screen. You can be shaken from side to side or tilted violently up and down in accordance with the game. It's this which makes the Multi-System the ultimate in gaming environments. Imagine it – in *OutRun* a car comes careering towards you; by pulling hard on the steering wheel the whole unit tilts on its side. But you go too far and you're off the road – the chair swings sharply – and crash. As you hit the dirt the chair judders up and down. This is what games should be all about – realism. And the Multi-System provides than environment.

What's It Got?

The circuitry necessarily has to be small because of the console's compact size. Consequently the insides of the console incorporate few components. VLSI (very large scale integration) had to be employed to get all the important bits and pieces into just one chip. 3D drawing routines are one of the machine's strong points and already this side is being exploited with Argonaut Software producing *Revenge Of Starglider*.

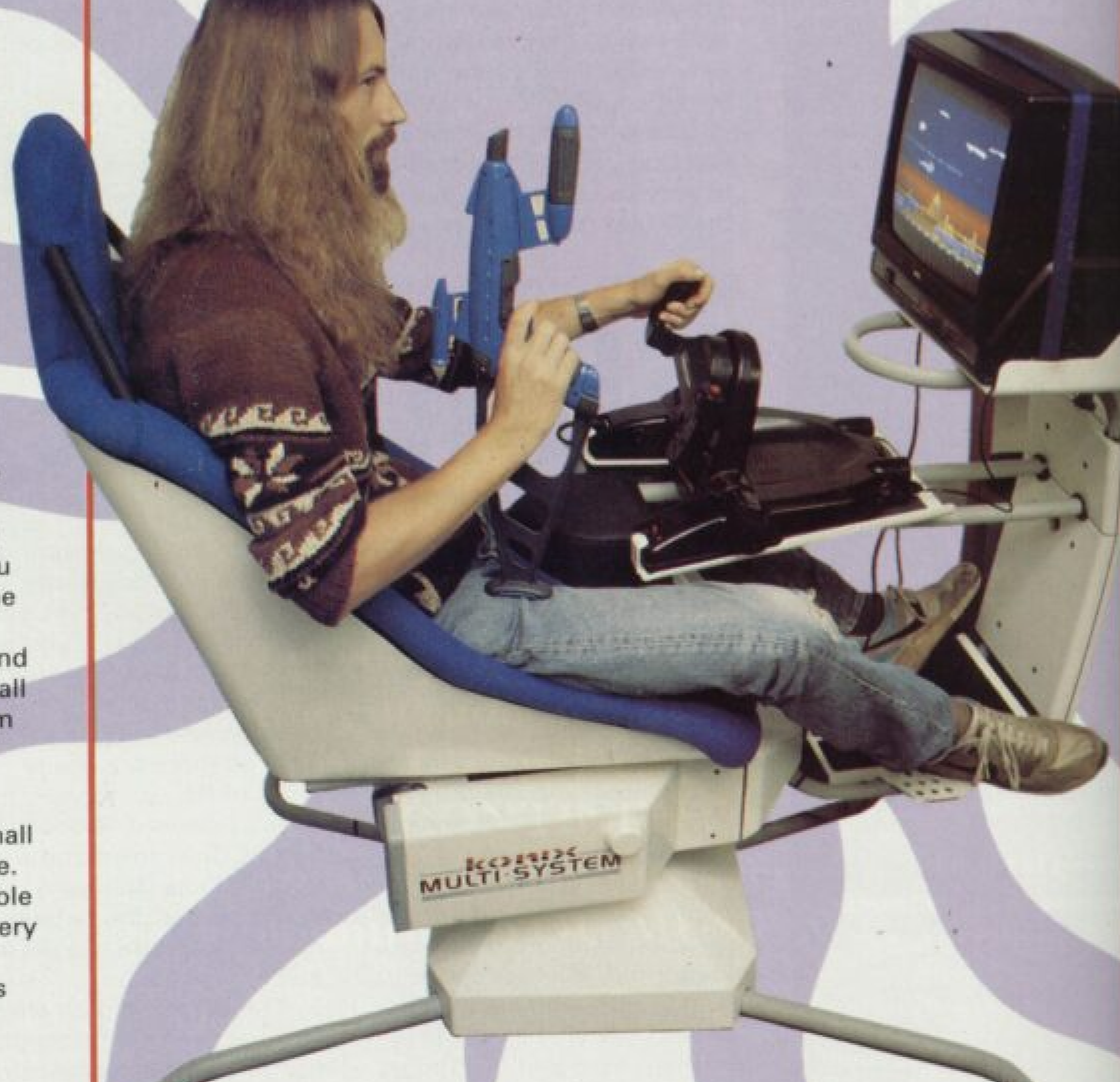
The main chip is a massive 160-pin job capable of producing three different resolutions. Low resolution boasts 256 by 200 pixels with 256 colours on screen. The last two resolutions only offer 16 colours, however the resolutions are 512 by 200 and 256 by 200. Altogether the programmer has access to a possible palette of 4096

JOYSTICK PORTS
Two joystick ports are provided on the arm of the console. These can be used for playing traditional platform games or arcade adventures.

LIGHT PHASER
Konix has designed a light gun which plugs into the joystick port.

MONITOR
A standard television rests on a shelf and then a support strap is tied around it so that it will not fall off during play.

DISK DRIVE
A 3.5-inch disk drive provides access to 880K of data. Most exciting is the fact that data can be loaded into the console while a game is running.



JUDDERER
Underneath the chair is a judderer which can move the chair to correspond with what is happening on screen.

FOOT PEDALS
A special unit can be purchased which comprises two pedals. The unit could be treated as a brake or accelerator depending on the programmer's ideas.





The control unit can be twisted and turned to give three types of control methods – steering wheel, yoke and handlebars. There are fire buttons located here so they replace the old style joystick completely.



colours, but the news is not all good. Unfortunately, the first two resolutions use up to 50K of memory which is unhealthy when you consider that there's only 256K of memory on board. The third mode is the most economic since the entire screen can be addressed with just 25K. The dedicated hardware means object manipulations are very rapid.

Storage Media

Unlike other consoles, the Multi-System doesn't store software on memory cards. Instead a 3.5-inch double-sided disk drive accepts disk software. A total of 880K of data can be stored on each disk. The design of the Konix makes it possible to load data into the console whilst a game is running. According to Attention To Detail, who helped design the disk format, it will be impossible for pirates to copy the software.

The first few software releases won't take great advantage of the Multi-System – and will doubtless require traditional joystick control. Konix is encouraging a number of programming houses to develop software which will support the Multi-System to the full, but until developers get the complete kit it'll be impossible.

One project which Konix is particularly eager to develop is a sailing simulation that'll use the chair to make the player feel the effects of sea travel and certain weather conditions. It's when games can be designed with the power chair as an integral part of the concept that simulations can take on a whole new meaning. Who knows what we might be seeing on the Konix in six months time?

KONIX CONSOLE SOFTWARE



BIKERS/ Argonaut Software

***Bikers* will be released free with the console and is a fairly standard racing game. However, it exploits the potential of the Konix system by being extremely fast and addictive. It shows the Multi-System off to the full by making extensive use of the power chair to simulate the effect of turning corners and crashing. It's been written by Argonaut software and features 256 colours on screen at once and quality sound effects.**



MUTANT CAMELS '89/ Llamasoft

Jeff Minter has gone to town in *Mutant Camels '89*. Because of his love of colour, he's very excited by the Konix Multi-System and has gone to town with the 256 colour mode. Five levels of action and an enormous number of weapon systems make this shoot 'em up an addictive challenge. The game uses the power chair to simulate the effects of movement. The graphics shown here are to be redesigned by a graphic artist – the range of colours will not change.



STARRAY/ Logotron

An improved version of Logotron's Starray works in 256-colour low resolution mode. Because of the Konix system's hardware scrolling, it will be able to move at startling speeds, but Logotron is also concentrating on creating some astonishing sound effects. Seven levels of shoot 'em up action are available – and use is made of the power chair.

KONIX KRUSHERS?

So much for the Konix. What about all the other consoles out there?

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM
From £80, Virgin/Mastertronic

Available in various configurations, the Master System has the great advantage that its manufacturer is the leading coin-op producer.

Software comes in cartridge or smart card format. The resolution offered is 256 by 192 pixels, choice of 64 colours from the palette and three channel mono sound. The processor is the ageing, but trusty, Z80.

NEC PC ENGINE
From £200, Micromedia

Seriously wicked custom graphics and sound hardware mean that the Engine can produce stunning audio visuals. For a few hundred pounds the NEC CD ROM player can be attached to the console. Because of this, software comes on compact disk or cartridge.

The hardware offers a choice of 512 colours from the palette, 320 by 256 pixels and six channels of mono sound. Two versions of the NEC console exist: one for connection to a TV and another for attachment to a scart-equipped monitor.

NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
From £100, Nintendo

With a huge number of machines sold in the States and Japan, this baby has the largest mountain of software available – and there's more coming all the time.

On the hardware front, the Nintendo boasts a 52 colour palette, a screen resolution of 256 by 240 pixels and three channels of mono sound.

ATARI 2600 VCS
From £50, Atari

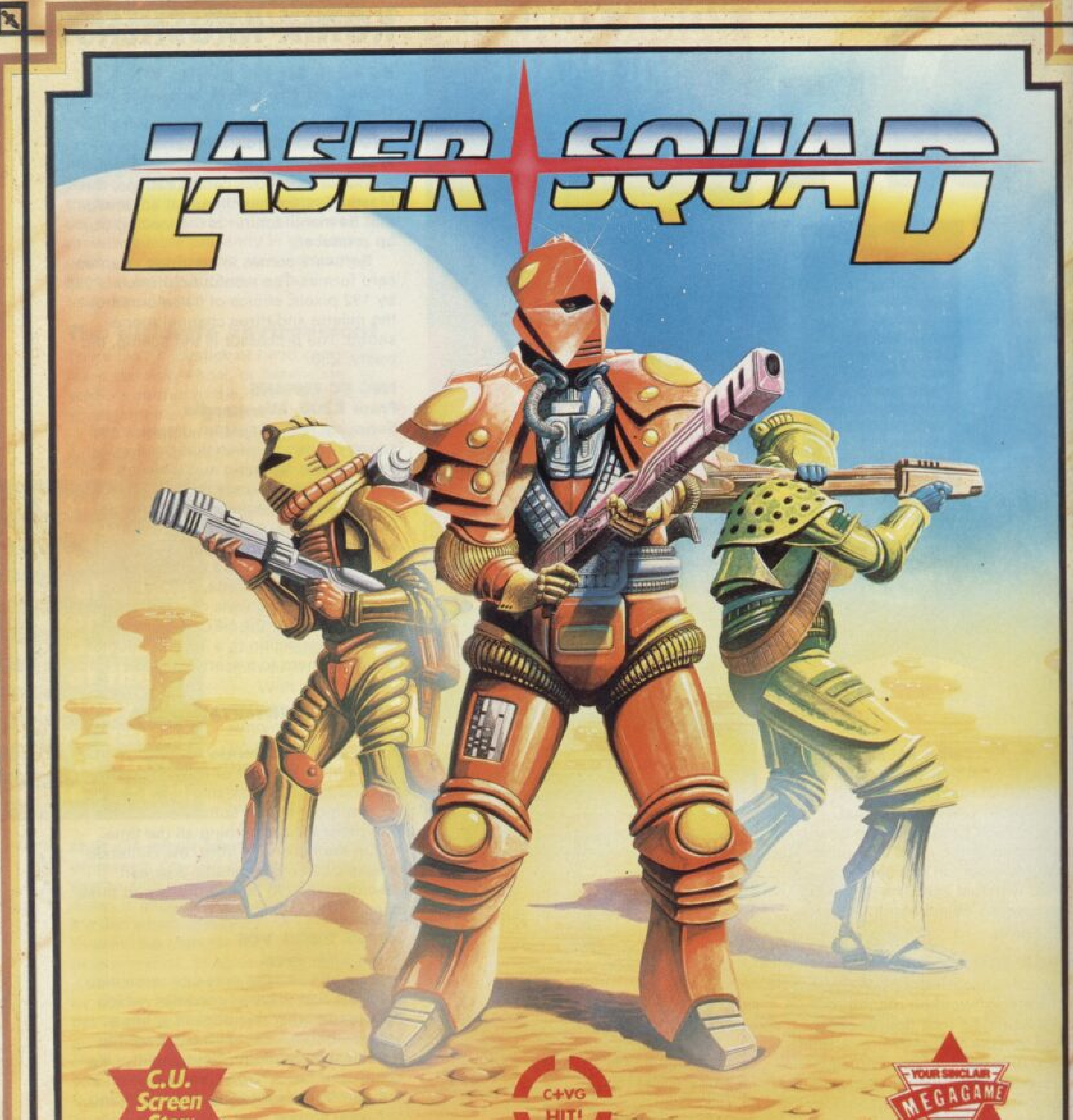
A real oldie and the only one remaining from the first wave of consoles which appeared earlier this decade. It has a very primitive look when compared to the latest technology. Nevertheless, it's cheap and has a large software base. The only problem is locating any remaining software stocks...

A total palette of 16 colours exist along with a resolution of 160 by 192 pixels and a three-channel mono sound generator. Not the hottest hardware around, but for the money there's no beating it.

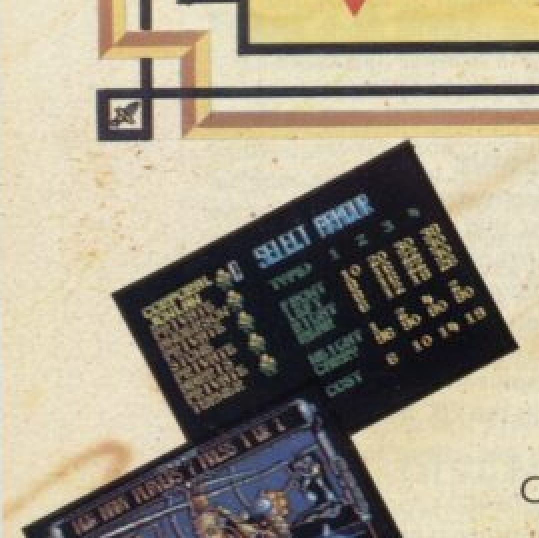
SEGA MEGADRIVE
TBA, Virgin Mastertronic

Launched earlier this year in Japan, the Megadrive is currently tops as far as available console entertainment is concerned. When we say available, it's here only if you don't mind a trip to Hong Kong. Don't despair though, the machine will be on sale in the UK by Easter of next year.

The Megadrive is a 16-bit box of tricks with a Motorola 68000 processor running at 8MHz, Z80 co-processor running at 4MHz, 64 colours on screen from a palette of 512, and FM stereo output. There's a dongle available which lets you run existing Master System games.



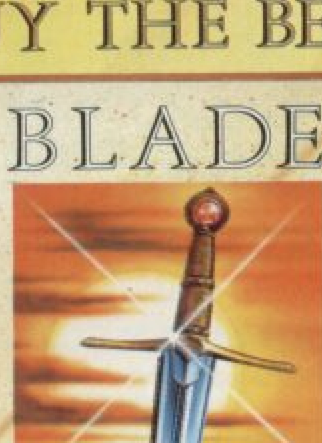
BUY THE BEST



BLADE

"Laser Squad is one of the best games to appear."

Commodore user



"It's one or two player tactical warfare situation . . with great graphics, sound, playability and hookability to boot. One player it's great, two players it's unbeatable."

C+VG



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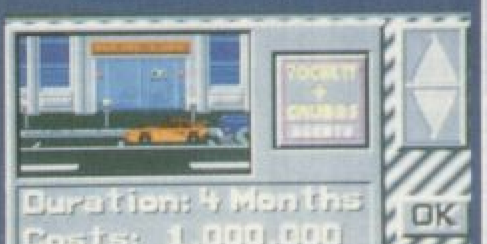
Available: Amiga £19.95, Atari ST £19.95, P.C. £24.95, Archimedes £24.95, C64 cass. £9.95, C64 disk £19.95, Amstrad CPC cass. £9.95, Amstrad disk £19.95, Spectrum cass. £9.95, Spectrum disk £19.95 and MSX £9.95.

OIL IMPER

SUITCASE: Man in a suitcase? Nope, it's a contract for hiring a John Wayne type chappie to put out your oil well fires, or aeroplane tickets if you decide to do it yourself.

TELEPHONE: It's for yoohoo! Any telephone messages which arrive will be put up on screen when you click on the telephone.

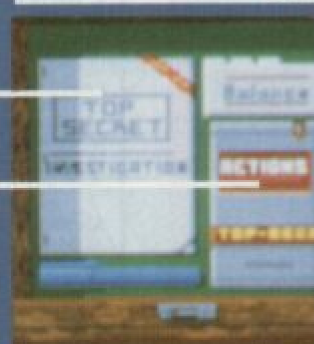
SPY: Hire Tocket and Crubbs to do your detective work? With stupid names like that, not a chance.





SABOTEUR: Or get a saboteur to destroy Transoil's oilrigs, perchance? Lumme! It's just one decision after another!





DRAWER: Only one person's gonna get their hands in your drawers, and that's you. Why? Because here's where you do all your illegal deals.

THE MAIN OFFICE: Right at the start you get to choose your style of office. Being the cuddly-wuddly pipe and rocking chair type *(Eh? Ed)*, I go for the nice leather chair and fire jobbie.

Well 'oil' be jiggered. We always thought oil drilling was done Dallas style complete with evil oil barons, champagne lunches and, of course, accompanying bimbos. But *Sean Kelly* found different when he loaded up *Oil Imperium*.

Who wants to be a millionaire? Er... me, actually. So long as it doesn't involve any hard work or selling various bodily organs that is. And now I've found the perfect way to become one —without risk to life or limb –by playing *Oil Imperium*.

The basic aim of *Oil Imperium*, the latest game from Rainbow Arts is to make piles (or barrels, in this particular case) of moolah by becoming a JR Ewing clone and exploiting the worlds' natural oil resources. You play against three other opposing oil barons (either computer or player operated) and can choose to win in one of four ways: by becoming the richest oil baron after three years; by making over $80 million dollars in liquid assets; by bankrupting all three other players or by taking over 80 percent of the market share. Having made your target choice, you begin with five million dollars (gimme), seated at the office desk.

WHEELIN' 'N' DEALIN'

Now it's time to start wheelin' and dealin'. Pick one of the daunting arra of options available and dive in. Each option is chosen from a number of icons which either bring up a further of choices, a report or, erm, somethin else. The first thing to do is buy an oilfield (seems logical), and some oil rigs to stick on it. Next invest in some advice on the probable oil yield.

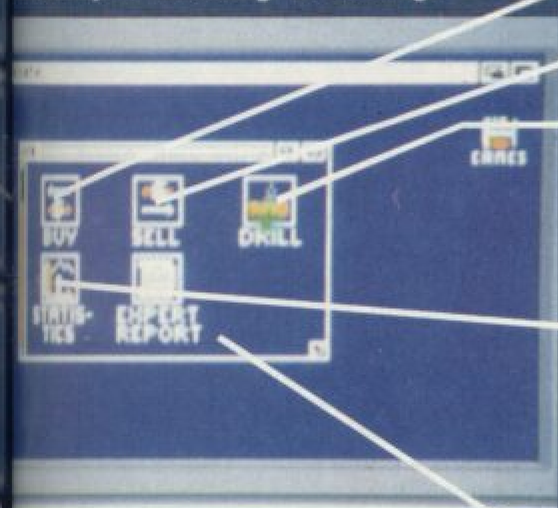
Once you've bought your land, drilling rights and oil rigs, it's time to start drilling. This'll lead you into the first arcade sequence of the game. If you've got the JR touch, then a colum of oil will rise up the shaft, and fount from the top. On the other hand if you're more like Cliff Barnes then yo probably be presented with a messa along the lines of 'Drilling a fiasco. C $80,000.' Just the sort of encouragement that a budding oil ba like yourself needs really.

RUM



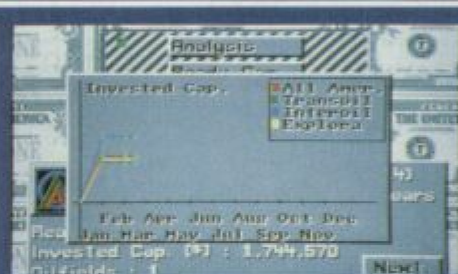
ORLD MAP: Want to check who's ught what land? Who's putting up oil lls where? Check out this map.

MPUTER TERMINAL: Here's where you most of your wheeling 'n' dealing.



BUY: Get yer oil fields here! Special offer this week.

SELL: Off loading your oil supplies can keep the bank balance topped up nicely.



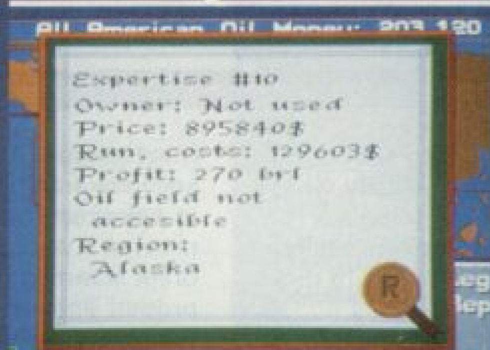
STATISTICS: All the latest investment info in pretty graph form, and pretty indecipherable too. (Not on ST).



DRILL: Blimey, this is really boring - boring, geddit? Select this to tap the oil. Leads to arcade sub-game.



NEWSPAPER: Read all about it! All the latest greasy info, and 'financial fillies' on page three.



COMMISSION REPORT: Before you go buying land, it's best to check whether it's got more oil than a bag of McDonalds' large 'fries' or if it's drier than a dingo's dongle. (Not on ST.)

This isn't the only arcade section to the game, two others crop up later on too. The first involves putting out fires on oil wells by chasing round like the proverbial blue bottomed fly, and placing the right amount of dynamite on each well. As for the second arcade sequence, that'll arise when having sold some of your oil, your workers cock it up and you're required to help them put things right. Yup, life's tough at the top.

WHAT A BORE

Throughout the game, seasons will come and go, your pet dog will die, Aunty Mabel will need a new colostomy bag and you'll attempt to expand your empire in any number of ways. Should you, for example, tie half of your output in a supply contract? Get the oil out on time and you will get an excellent price for it. Fail, and as well as looking a bit of a pillock down the 'Wheeltappers And Oil Refinery Owners Social Club', you could get fines of over $1,000,000. Alternatively, you could employ spies and saboteurs. They're pretty pricey. But if your rivals' oil wells are destroyed, then you can steal the march and pick up their contracts and trade. If your saboteur is discovered though, then your oilfields will be confiscated, given to the opposing companies, and you won't get 10 percent discount at Shell Garages any more.

You won't be alone in your conniving however, for throughout the month your other three rivals will be hiring spies, buying land, signing supply contracts and selling oil too.

Fortunately, every month a report will tell you each of the other companies' dealings — how much they've invested and how many oilfields or wells they've bought. Checking the newspapers each month will provide more news of the dirty tricks your competitors are up to, and examining the maps will give an indication of who owns what, and what oil wells are up for sale. All vital info to the budding baron.

Have you got the speed, skill and determination to out-JR JR? Would you rather be burning down the opposition's oil rigs or beating them by supplying the best grade of oil and at the fastest speed? Now's your chance to prove that when it comes to oil, you're as slick as the rest. Oil! Slick! Geddit? *(You're fired. Ed)*

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Oil Imperium
PUBLISHER	Rainbow Arts
PRICE	£24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	Out now

review OIL IMPERIUM



Jonathan: I was understandably unimpressed by the prospect of struggling through an oil drilling simulation. More accurately, I refused point blank. "It's really good, honest!" they told me, so after checking that their fingers weren't crossed I decided to give it a go. But I couldn't. No way, Jose. So I went for a walk round the block, had some lunch and then came back to it.

Blimey! Monstrously good music, graphics nothing short of awesome, heart-stopping action – and not an oil rig in sight. Then it dawned on me. Ooops, I'd loaded *Xenon II* by mistake!

Flogging oil, as it turns out, is a pretty vicious (or should that be viscose?) business. My attempts tended to go up in flames after a couple of months, at least for the first 82 goes anyway. But I loved every minute of it, or most of them anyway. The ones spent swopping disks were probably the worst, the rest were, on the whole, okay.

Oil Imperium has been heavily dressed up in flashy graphics and loads of unnecessary, but desirable features. From the range of offices available, I plumped for the one with the airliner flying past outside and a plastic USS Enterprise on the window shelf. From the comfort of my swivel chair I then set about disposing of the five million in cash I found myself with. I bought a pleasant little plot in South Wales, which I was assured was rich in 'black gold' as we in the biz call it, and drilled a hole in the middle. Next thing I knew, the whole thing was in flames and I was frantically trying to work out how the fire fighting bit worked (or didn't, and still doesn't as far as I can see).

HASSLE FACTOR: 3
A fair amount of disk-swopping, and far too many random disasters, if you ask me.

Definitely the most unnecessary and hence most desirable bit of the game



is the simulated ST on which you can carry out your transactions. I'm not quite sure what the head of a multi-national oil business would be doing entrusting his entire worldly wealth to an ST, wonderful though they are, but I liked it anyway. The next best bits are the little arcade games. These usually spell disaster for a strategy game, but in this case they work quite well. Apart from that wretched fire fighting one of course! Actually, I wasn't too keen on the pipe-laying one either – one slip and you've had it. The drilling bit seemed fine, though, mainly because I didn't muck it up once.

Stripping away all the flashy graphics and gimmicks, and examining the strategy at the heart of *Oil Imperium*, reveals a game a lot simpler that it first seems. All you really have to do to make any progress is invest as much as possible in as many productive-looking



Sean: This is an excellently programmed, thoughtfully presented and addictive game, with quality oozing from every leak. *Oil Imperium* is not exactly going to get your trigger finger pumping like an Exxon dead bird remover, but it will provide a good few weeks of entertainment. In the short term, it takes quite a while to get the hang of what's going on in the developing stages. Once you've found your way round the various icons though, and have begun

HASSLE FACTOR: 1
Even with one meg, there's a fair amount of disk-juggling.

to suss out just exactly what's going on, the game really starts to pick up.

Control wise, *Oil Imperium* is designed so that you use your mouse much more than your joystick, and barrels of thought went into producing a very user-friendly game. The ease with which you can carry out fairly complex actions with a minimum of mouse clicking is certainly one of the pulling points of this game. The simplicity of the controls, however, belies the fact that *Oil Imperium* is still a lot more sophisticated than the couple in the Gold Blend advert. There's tons to do and billions of decisions to make, all of which effects the development of the game.

Suprisingly, the arcade sequences fit in very well. Whereas in most games of this nature the arcade sections are about as welcome as a fart in a spacesuit, here they serve to provide a welcome break from all the brain scrambling involved in the game proper. They're well programmed and funny, and failure in these sequences won't effect your progress in the main game to any great extent.

The graphics are also incredibly attractive throughout. Whether you are putting out oil rig fires in Alaska, drilling in the Middle East, or simply collecting the end of month report on what the other oil barons have been up to, you



oil fields as you can. And if you think it'll help – send out saboteurs to wreck everyone else's. The rest is really down to how many millions of pounds worth of gear gets blown to smithereens each month. Quite a lot, usually, when you're playing with several players, however, everyone's too out of breath from rushing in and out of the room to avoid seeing what their competitors are getting up to.

Oil Imperium makes a refreshing change from shooting things. Although the little 'game' present on the pretend office computer could be called overkill, it manages to turn selling oil into a fun pastime. Unbelievable, but true.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	84
S	SOUND	60
A	ADDICTIVENESS	74
E	EXECUTION	88

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Drilling for oil may sound boring (geddit?) and probably is, but this provides hours of fun. And I didn't mention Red Adair once! (Oops...)

79

can be sure that the graphical representation will be nothing less than excellent. The tunes, likewise, are perfectly suited to the mood throughout.

My one worry is that there is not enough there to keep you playing for more than a month or so, and that even with the variety of options, it could become a little repetitive over time. This aside, *Oil Imperium* is a highly playable and professionally presented game that serves as a lesson to other software houses on how a good game should be presented. Now if only all Amiga games were like this....

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	87
S	SOUND	79
A	ADDICTIVENESS	80
E	EXECUTION	88

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

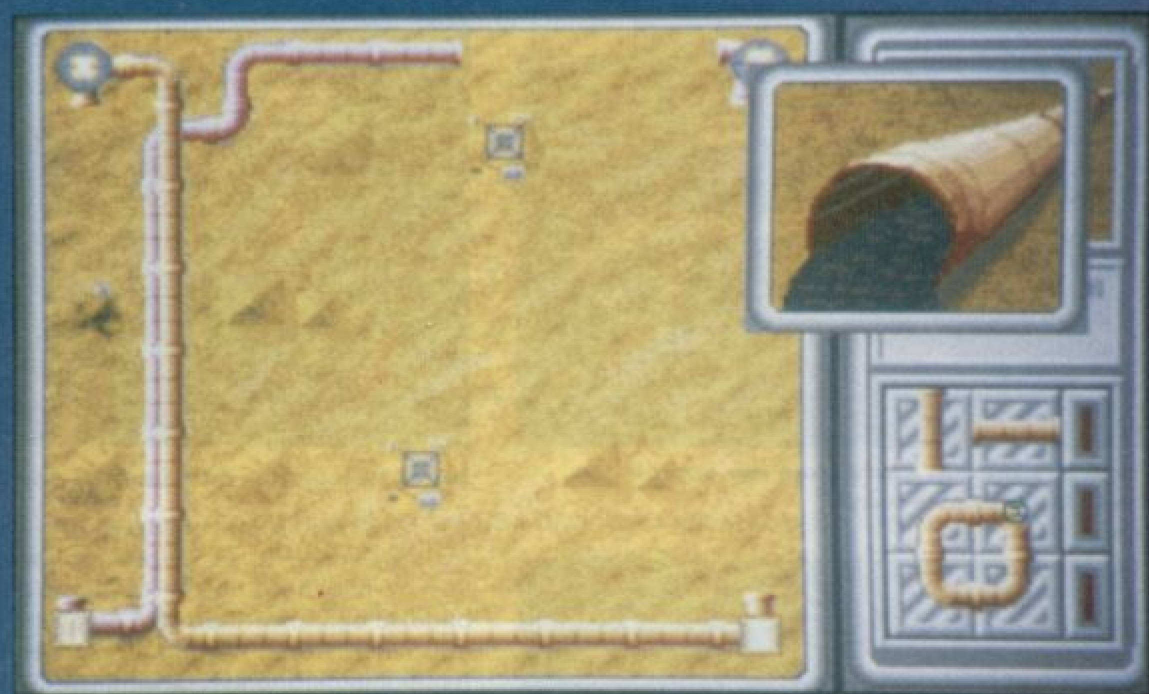
An unusual but addictive arcade strategy game. Now there's a new game category.

84

THE ARCADE SCREENS



THE DRILL: In the drilling arcade sub-game you must position the drill correctly and attempt to reach oil. Left a bit! Right a bit! Fire! Oops!



THE PIPELINE: I hate this section — here you've got to race against the computer to lay down pipeline. I did something like this to our toilet plumbing once. My Mum wasn't too pleased.



THE FIRES: Fire! Fire! In this arcade section you've got to put out the fires before they destroy your oil fields. Not quite as easy as it sounds especially when you're completely crap.

review

STRIDER



Level Two is set in the Siberian wastes and is full of nasty mutts like this one. Get down, Shep!



Yikes! It's the big nasty from the end of Level One. Runawaaaay!



Level Three is more platform and laddery than many of them, and features Strider bouncing Tarzan-like through an Amazon rain forest.



Level Five (hurrah!) Strider must make his way through an enemy warship, killing more giant gorillas, a giant floating satellite, Russian guards and floating androids. Eat lazer scumbag!



Level Two again, this time it's the giant Robo- gorilla — kill him with the super

US Gold's conversion of Capcom's classic coin-op *Strider* has those nasty Ruskies as the baddies again, with Strider, as a kind of futuristic Rambo, waging a one-man battle against the evil Commies.

It's essentially a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up on five levels and your task is to infiltrate the Red Army and then return its secrets back to your superiors — thus saving the western world no less. To do so, you have to slash your way through all manner of foes including a giant robot ape, a pack of vicious sabre-toothed tigers, Russian guards and some lethal boomerang-throwing rock men.

RUSSIAN AROUND

Your enemies change with each level as does the battleground which is made up of various platforms. Strider's mission could be a bit one-sided were it not for his superhuman agility. He runs, walks, jumps, crawls and defies the laws of gravity by somersaulting like some sort of Olympic trampolining champ.

The game kicks off in Red Square where you're dropped off by a futuristic hang glider. Soon after you land, you can activate a defence droid by pressing your fire button. The R2-D2-looking droid will then circle around you, firing off killer boomerangs to help clear your path. On this level you're attacked by Russian guards — once they're killed you've got to somersault over a well nasty crevice and navigate your way up one side of a peak and down the other, without getting zapped by a series of static cannons.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Prehistoric-looking sabre-toothed tigers attack you on your way to the snow-capped peaks of Siberia in level two, where you're also confronted by an awesome metal monkey android. If you survive that icy test it's off to the lowlands where you meet the rock men warriors slinging poisoned spears and chucking deadly-poisoned boomerangs.

The fourth level swops rocks for metal and is set on what looks like the back of a battleship with vertically pumping gun turrets, spewing out ammo like there's no tomorrow. Finally, it's off to a stark industrial complex that's a dead ringer for the Axis Chemical plant in *Batman*.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Strider
PUBLISHER	US Gold
PRICE	£19.99/ £24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	Out now

It's 2048 AD. Mrs Thatcher's still ruling the roost, the Queen Mum's just celebrated her 147th birthday (even if she can't blow out the candles!) and the crew of the Starship Enterprise are still 'oldly going in *Star Trek XXV*. In *Strider*, US Gold reckon old Gorby's legacy of perestroika and glasnost will be but a fart in the wind of history.



AMIGA

Sean: Bit athletic, this Strider chappie. There can't be that many geezers, who, rather than whip out a Magnum and blast someone in the goolies, would prefer to leap into the air, do a double back somersault and back flip before landing and slapping the assailant round the cranium with a half brick. Still, I suppose it's pretty brassy in Russia, so all this leaping about malarky keeps you warm.

The major drawing point of *Strider* in the arcades was the athleticism of the main character. The US Gold conversion has obviously gone for smaller sprites than the coin-op, but the range of movement of Strider and the eight way scrolling has been preserved, and the game moves very fast and fairly smoothly.

On the graphics front, *Strider* is more colourful than the lav after an all-night party, and the major meanies are all beautifully animated. The enemies encountered are various, and a number of ploys must be used to progress through the game. This makes a change from just lobbing the axe about slicing and dicing, and adds to *Strider's* appeal. Sound in the game is fairly crap, mostly limited to an annoying grunt each time *Strider* attacks anyone, with the odd tune and sample elsewhere.

One tiny hassle was that if I happened to move the joystick in the wrong direction, Strider would leap into the air or jump in the wrong direction, performing a double 'posey sod' hyperflip manoeuvre which lasted several seconds and usually occured whilst I was in the throes of battling it out with a major assailant. I was then sent back quite a way down a level, which often meant defeating major meanies twice or three times in a game — not to put too fine a point on it, a real pain in the arse.

All minor gripes though, as this is an excellent computer game, and one which will keep the most ardent arcadester glued to their computer through the Autumn evenings. Better than a slap in the face with a used codpiece (*I should hope so! Ed*).

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
Usual loading between levels, but nothing unendurable.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	84
S	SOUND	73
A	ADDICTIVENESS	80
E	EXECUTION	82

Excellent coin-op conversion, and an addictive computer game in its own right.

81

ST

Matt: Wahey! *Strider* was the coin-op sensation that rocked the nation a mere couple of months ago, and already it's out on 16-bit! Honestly, the lead times on these things is getting just ridiculously short. But who can complain though, when *Strider* is such a nifty little game?

The little hero sprite, Strider, is the jumpiest somersaultiest and generally bounciest in history — but he's easily controllable too! Double ber-limey! Hardly fair sending him in to take on the Red Army on his lonesome, is it? Not so, chummo! Armed with a Luke Skywalker laser sword and the bouncingest Air Ware soles in Doc Marten history, he's one of those chaps who's never content to stand still when a quadruple-reverse-spin-backflip-with-double-axle-and-quarter-pike will do.

What we have here is a well — but not spectacularly — executed platform beat 'em up with a suitably wide range of backdrops, problems and baddies. What's slightly disappointing is the limited way in which some of these are animated, and the general tendancy for each bit to be very hard for a while then a total cinch once you've worked out how to do it. I could be wrong though, 'cos *Strider* does have one rather neat and nifty little ace up its sleeve — Stridey himself. If ever a sprite was worth watching, it's him. (But don't try and imitate him at home kids! You know what happened to the guy who thought he was really that superhero Spiderman!)



It looks to me like US Gold has simplified the map of the game a bit from the coin-op, which lets it get away with a more limited range of sprite animations (for instance, instead of having seven or so gradients of hill for our boy to climb there are only about four) but even so the range of movements Stridey can make are nothing short of remarkable. The ST version shares with the Amiga the fact that you can sometimes access an unwanted (and therefore occasionally fatal) move by a slight slip of the joystick, but it's not quite as tragic because everything moves a bit faster here. In other words yes, you do get the occasional backflip you didn't ask for, but no, it's not too frustrating because it doesn't last quite so long. For those who dislike the Amiga's grunt city soundtrack (ie everyone in this office) your more limited ST noises are a bit more socially acceptable too.

As I see it the ST version of *Strider* is a smart conversion, but it's only good-to-very-good rather than blooming brilliant, like the arcade. Because of the speed the ST probably has it slightly over the Amiga, and some of it plays like a dream. My only nagging doubts are that though it's undoubtably a very clean and professional program, it also seems like a bit of a thin one. If we believed in predicted interest curves (whatever they're meant to be) instead of thinking they're a load of pseudo scientific bollocks (which we do) I'd suspect it'd go straight downwards rather sharpish. The first two weeks would be smashing fun though.

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
Nothing you could really take up arms against here, we're glad to say.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	82
S	SOUND	70
A	ADDICTIVENESS	85
E	EXECUTION	83

Super smashing lovely arcade conversion – faster than the Amiga but shares the same faults, i.e. a bit short and easy.

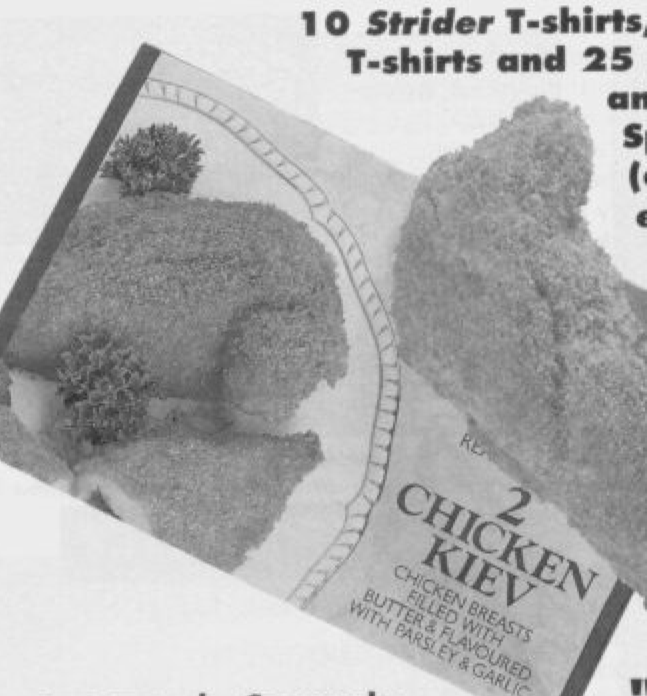
84

WIN A COMPLETE SONY HI-FI STACK SYSTEM WITH CD PLAYER! PLUS

CHICKEN KIEV!

COMPO

10 *Strider* T-shirts, 20 US Gold T-shirts and 25 *Strider* games! Um, and a Marks and Sparks Chicken Kiev (except someone's eaten most of it).



"Mmmmm!"

Yah, Comrade. Those running dogs of capitalism at US Gold have got a special consignment up for grabs to coincide with the defection of their new game *Strider*. Fight the KGB, battle your way to Siberia and fend off jungle jibes, sorry tribes, to face the Grand Master of the Red Army in this Russian romp to save the western world. But what about the loot?



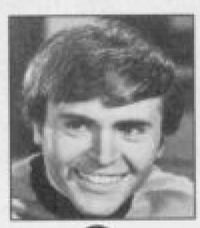
THE CONTRABAND

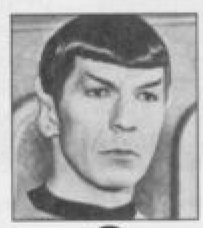
We've smuggled some pretty hot stuff across the Iron Curtain, er.. but you'll have to go and collect it from the cistern in the third lav from the left at the Watford Gap Little Chef. First prize is a Sony 551 Compact disc stacked hi-fi system complete with record deck, tape deck and speakers – worth 600 roubles (actually 2400 on the red market), that's £600 quid to you!

Plus there's loads of runner-up prizes – 10 *Strider* T-shirts, 20 US Gold T- shirts and 10 copies of *Strider*. You can't afford not to enter! But you'll have to trade us some classified information first.

YOUR MISSION

Should you choose to accept it, is to crack the following codes and discover who passed the information on. For example if you thought Chekov said "Oh look we're in *The Cherry Orchard"* then put the letter f. beside number one. Once you've done that cut out the coupon, put it in an envelope and send it to Ra Ra Rasputin Competition, ZERO , 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.


1


2


3


4


5


6

a) "Opening hailing frequencies. Captain."
b) "More thrust, Scotty."
c) "The engines cannae take it, Capt'n."
d) "He's dead Jim."
e) " It's highly illogical."
f) "Oh look we're in *The Cherry Orchard.*"

KREMLIN RULES

- Comrades working undercover in Dennis Oneshots Ltd or US Gold are not permitted to enter.
- You have till midnight on the 30th November to bring us the documents otherwise it's the iron curtains for you.
- Ze Editor's decision is final.

Listen carefully I shall answer this only once...

1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____
4 ____ 5 ____ 6 ____

My secret name and hiding place are:

Name ____

Address ____

Postcode ____

stuff







If your name's Nicholas Parsons - turn over. Stuff is only for the hep cats out there. This month we've taken a look at the mountains of comic book memorabilia that's around at the moment (and a couple of "futuristic" things too)...

1 TINTIN ALARM CLOCK

If you're used to rude awakenings - like the cat jumping on your face at 6.37 every morning - then the Tintin alarm clock's the thing for you. It even tocks quietly - what more could you want? (*A clock with a quiet alarm. Ed*) From Pilot at £16.95.

2 TINTIN FILOFAX

Are you a merchant banker? Then you could be needing one of these - the Tintin filofax. In smooth black leather, it sports a jolly nice commemorative "60 Ans d'Aventures" badge and carries its own Tintin paper. A snip from Pilot at only £49.95. *(Cough! Ed).*

3 TINTIN'S BUST

Tintin's bust (hem!) is really rather fetching. Another solid wood item, it depicts Tintin - complete with cowlick - sporting a turquoise blue pully and looking pretty nonchalant for a junior reporter. Available from Pilot. Price £29.95.

4 TINTIN'S MOON ROCKET

Just the job if you're planning your annual holiday on er.... Uranus. Made entirely from the flesh of trees, Tintin's Moon Rocket is completely brilliant! At £19.95 a launch, it's not cheap but a tad more reliable than the Space Shuttle! From Pilot.

5 THE JOKER'S ELECTRONIC LAUGHING BALL

Slip the purple electronic ball into your pocket, press the two metal contact points (whilst grimacing menacingly). And Hey Presto everyone thinks you're a real prat! A mere £8.99 at Forbidden Planet.

6 DONALD'S BATH ALARM

Incredibly Useful Inventions No.1756 is this Donald Duck bath alarm! It'll prevent disaster (if you leave the bath running while preparing duck á l'orange f'rinstance) by emitting a "loud audible tone" when he starts to 'drown'. From The General Store, £11.99.

7 BATMAN TATTOOS

Fancy rubbing one or more of your fave bat stars onto any part of your body? You perv! Try these trendy Battoos then. A snip at £1.99 from Forbidden Planet.

8 SUPER SLIM WALKMAN

This new Walkman WM 150 is not much bigger than a packet of ciggies and has a tiny, wafer-thin rechargeable battery. It's got all the usual features like Dolby and mega bass and a pretty nifty recharger too. From Dixons at £99.99.

9 KINETIC PLASMA CHAMBER

Still scared of the dark? Then get one of these. This alternative 'nite-light' lights up at the sound of your voice and the touch of your hand. Only trouble is you have to stay awake to keep it glowing. The Nightstar Kinetic Plasma Chamber costs £139 from the Reject Shop.

10 MR. C. MORE BUNZ

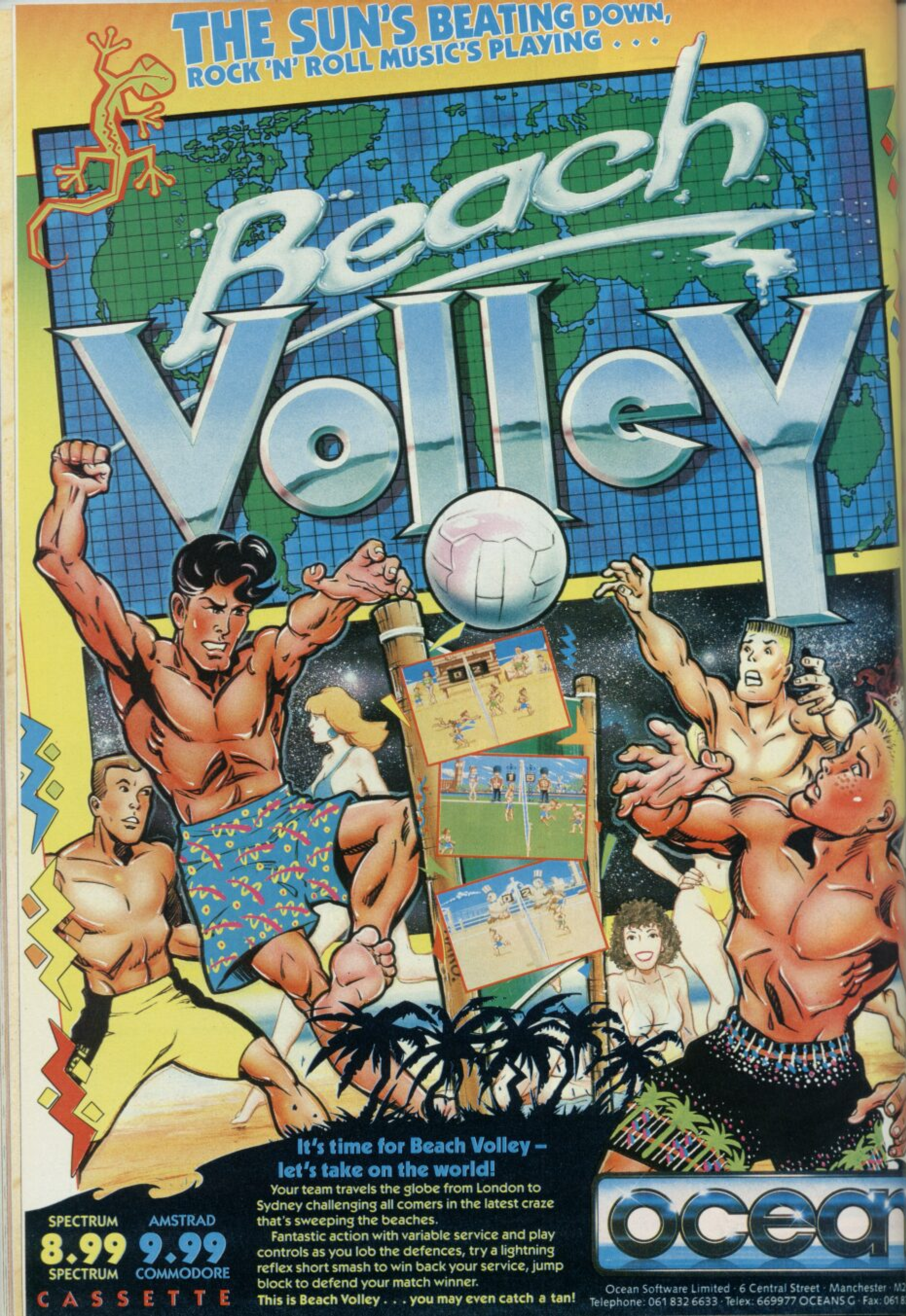
Squeeze his pump (??) and he'll drop his trousers. Bottoms up! Available from The General Store, price £15.99.

11 '57 CHEVY FM RADIO

Wow, now you can get your very own '57 Chevrolet. This model-sized semi-Chevy has been converted into a fun FM stereo radio and it doesn't sound half bad. From The Reject Shop, £29.99.

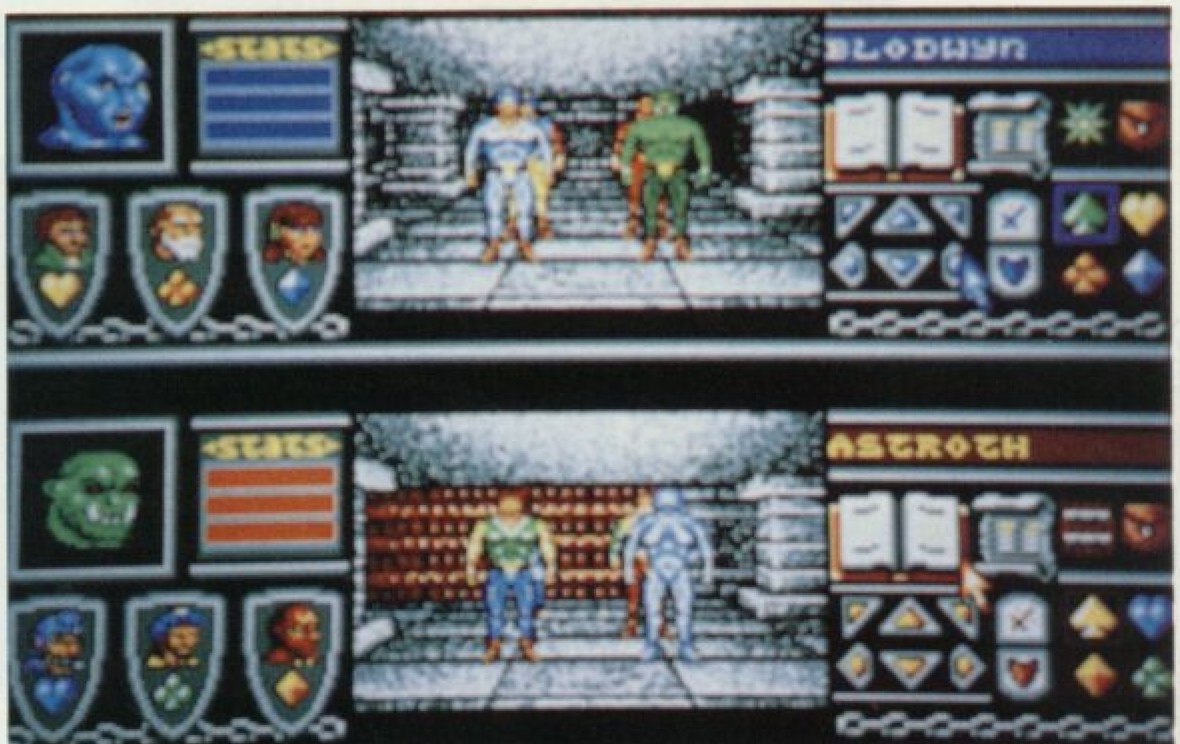
STUFF STORES

PILOT: 34 Floral Street Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DJ.
THE GENERAL STORE: Long Acre, Covent Garden, London WC1.
REJECT SHOP: The Plaza, Oxford Street, London W1.
DIXONS: Various branches nationwide.
FORBIDDEN PLANET: Various branches nationwide, Mail Order: 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG.


THE SUN'S BEATING DOWN,
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BLOODWYCH

Masters *David McCandless* and *Jonathan Davies* our knights of old battle with *The Bloodwych*, Mirrorsoft's latest adventure game...



Pretty crowded these underground caverns. Can't see the attraction myself. Now is that blue person a woman, I wonder?

ST

Jonathan: I usually dread having to tackle this breed of game as it tends to involve staying up until the wee small hours with a manual in one hand and a mug of re-caffeinated coffee in the other... And that's just to load it! Actually, playing them is too mentally devastating to contemplate. But this time was different. In fact I was so suprised to find myself enjoying *Bloodwych* that I decided to abandon my attempt on the world record for filling in an Etch-A-Sketch completely black (29 hours 46 mins 16 secs – P, O'Flannigan, USA) and instead attempted to thwart Zendick and the Lord of Entropy.

The first plus point worthy of attention is that in spite of the massive complexity of the game and the apparent enormity of the manual, *Bloodwych* isn't really that difficult to get into. Most of the manual is in Spanish anyway, and what does need to be absorbed is concisely written and free of all this 'Vestryl' and 'Treihadwyl' rubbish. That stuff is all confined to a section at the beginning, and can be torn out and discarded. Actually I decided to try it without the manual altogether to start with, and was surprised to find I only needed to refer to it a couple of times. This could be put down to my intuitive genius, but I think the game's sensible layout is a more likely explanation.

I was intrigued to find that some attempt has been made to give personalities to the characters, apart from the usual strength, intelligence etc. I accidentally disturbed one chap who had obviously just got out of bed and met with a hail of abuse. Naturally he refused to join my posse.

Map-making is essential, as the dungeon (or whatever it's meant to be) is an architectural disaster. Your sense of direction isn't aided by the scenery, which is a uniform shade of grey, broken only by the occasional tapestry or door. The graphics as a whole would best be described as minimalist, which is excusable as two players need to be squeezed in somehow, and animation exists only in the sense that there is some.

I enjoyed *Bloodwych* enormously. It really is an, erm, 'world inside your computer' (cough), and anyone looking for a few weeks of solid entertainment for the least possible financial outlay should grab a friend of similar inclinations and step this way.

GRAPHICS 68	ADDICTIVENESS 92	OVERALL 88
SOUND 34	EXECUTION 83	

AMIGA

David: *Bloodwych* is unashamedly *Dungeon Master* cut down and squeezed into a two-player game — and there are are no pretensions to that fact. *Bloodwych* has the same 3D first person view, the same looking catacombs and caverns, similar puzzle mechanisms (writing on walls, buttons, locked doors etc) and the same control system.

But *Bloodwych* improves on *Dungeon Master* in some respects. In the original, when you encountered another creature it was just a case of slamming your sword down its gullets first — no questions asked! In this two-player variant, you can actually communicate with adversaries. You can flatter them ("Thy sexual prowess is reknown in these parts"), you can insult them ("Thy cod-piece exudes the odour of pig swill"), you can them ask to do suspect things ("Please reveal thyself"... Cripes!), and you can generally banter with them. You can even recruit them to your 'merry' band, and engage your charisma to win them over if they are a little reluctant.

You move around the dungeon, using the joystick or mouse to click on a directions pointer. Doors are opened and objects picked up simply by clicking on them. Objects like keys and money are used by placing the relevant object in the 'use' box and clicking on it. The same applies for spells. Everything is straight forward and icon-driven.

In the dual player game, each player starts in a different part of the dungeon, with the chance of a 'rendez-vous' likely only by accident. Nevertheless it's fun to watch your pal struggle against several trolls or get stepped on by some renegade wizard.

In adapting a game like *Dungeon Master* to two players you're bound to lose something. In this case it's sound and animation. The eye-watering thuds and groans of battle are gone, as are the clicks of opening portcullises and the blood-curdling screams of mutant mushrooms. Animation has been stripped to a minimum, with characters restricted to two frames, and a bare jerking limp when they move.

I can foresee *Dungeon Master* purists turning their 'oh-so-disdainful' noses up at this apparently inferior attempt. But it's not. The interaction element and two-player option add something new to what could become a stale genre. If you can forgive the jerky graphics, fairly poor animation, and slightly unwieldly controls, then *Bloodwych* will put a big grin on your face and a big dent in your social life.

GRAPHICS 75	ADDICTIVENESS 87	OVERALL 75
SOUND 40	EXECUTION 80	

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Bloodwych
PUBLISHER	Mirrorsoft
PRICE	£19.99,24.99
FORMAT	ST and Amiga
RELEASED	Out now!

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DENNIS ONESHOTS 1 ON SALE THIS MINUTE!

CHIP SHOP BOYS



Fancy yourself as Jason Donovan? Garry Glitter? Richard Clayderman? Sorry you're in the wrong place mate. If, on the other hand you're more into the synthed sounds of Bomb The Bass, Bobby Brown and The Eurythmics then you're one of The Chip Shop Boys. *Tim Ponting* explains all....

Before we launch straight into the bowels of The Chip Shop Boys (*Ugh! Ed*) I thought it would be useful, if first, I explained just who the hell I am, and second, what the hell I'm doing here.

If you've read the intro you'll know my name, if you haven't, stop skipping things and go back and read it. I'm pretty well up on all this musical stuff - I actually edit a rather good music magazine called *Rhythm*. As to what the hell am I doing here, well, I'm here to keep you up to date with all that's happening on the computer music scene. If you're in a band and want to use your computer to sample sound or synthesize, you've come to the right place. Though lots of you will already know the basics a lot of you won't so I'm going to start right at the beginning and explain everything you're likely to need to know month by month. Apart from the music lessons I'll also be interviewing (or getting other people to) top bands who're already using 16-bit machines to produce their albums.

So, to kick off this month, we've got an introduction to MIDI and an interview with Tim Simenon of Bomb The Bass. Beat dis den!



BEAT DIS....

***Tim Pirelli* samples a few bars with Tim Simenon while he's laying down tracks for Bomb The Bass's forthcoming album.**

"One minute I was at college and I'd got a part-time waiter's job in a Japanese restaurant, and the next I was at No. 5 in the Charts." Not a bad claim, if you can make it.

Tim Simenon can, for he's the brains and the talent (and the looks) behind Bomb The Bass. If you listen to the pop charts you'll have heard the string of hits he's had with *Beat Dis, Megablast, Don't Make Me Wait,* and *Say a Little Prayer.* Tim is one of a growing number of musicians who are using record turntables and computers to make hit dance records. Tim's background as a DJ turned him on to music and got him into deejaying regularly in top London nightclubs, while his interest in computer games helped get him into using computers for music.

"I started deejaying when I was 15," he says. "My foundation is in deejaying and it's all really good experince. I can 'predict' hit records - I can tell you within a few seconds of putting a record on whether it's going to be a hit in the clubs. And 99 percent of my predictions are right.

"I can predict hit records."

"When I was much younger I was really into computer games," he continues. "Now I'm more into doing music, so that's what I'm doing."

In his school days Tim was playing games on a Sinclair Spectrum; a more fortunate friend of his had a Commodore 64. It may have seemed futuristic at the time, but today the Spectrum and Commodore 64 have since been left behind by a new generation of computers. Nevertheless it was a

"I was really into computer games."



C64 that Tim and producer Pascal Gabriel used to make Tim's first album, *Into The Dragon*, last year. "We had to run a program called *Pro 16* from a German software house called Steinberg to make the machine more useful to us in the studio." explains Tim. "Although the software was already out of date when we were using it, Pascal felt much happier with it than a lot of the other newer software that was around at the time."

It just goes to show that not everything that's bright, shiny and new necessarily represents progress.

While the C64 has given way to the Atari ST as the single most popular music computer (for dabblers and pro musicians alike), *Pro 16* has been superceded by other music programs like the *C-Lab Creator* and *Notator* and *Steinberg's Pro 24*. Latest of all is another Steinberg Program called *Cubase*. After completing *Into The Dragon* on *Pro 16*, Tim bought himself an Atari and tried out *Creator*. "The vibe wasn't good," he says, "so it went." Instead he started using *Pro 24*. "This year it's all been *Pro 24*," he confirms, "and I've started looking at *Cubase*. It looks really good.

"I liked the drum editor page in *Pro 16* which is something they didn't have in *Pro 24*. Now they've brought it back in *Cubase* . It's much easier to understand what you're doing when it's displayed on screen in front of you."

The drum editor is a grid display that shows the position of the drumbeats in each bar of music. Nine out of ten musicians who express a preference seem to agree that it's a much better way to work than using musical staves or event lists where the music appears more like a program listing than a piece of music. But why use a sequencer at all ?

"With a conventional guitar band you can have a jam to see what a song might sound like, but I can't do that. I can't go into a studio and say 'bass drum: track 1, snare: track 2....' I need a sequencer." explains Tim.

The ST only stores the note information needed to make Tim's collection of drum machines, synthesizers and samplers play his music. It doesn't record the sounds themselves - instead they are recorded onto multi-track tape in the same way 'real' instruments are recorded. The machines Tim uses are controlled by a system called MIDI (the Musical Instrument Digital Interface) that allows the computer to control all the other instruments. So what instruments does he use ?

"A lot of old gear," he replies. "A Minimoog, an Oscar and Roland Juno 106 synthesizers, a Roland TR909 drum machine and Akai S900 samplers."

None of these instruments are still being made, so the only way to buy them is second hand. Sometimes this means they won't cost you very much, but at other times 'fashionable' old synths can command quite a lot of money. During the Acid House craze last year the synthesizer responsible for the 'acid sounds' was a Roland TB303 Bassline. Before the acid craze you could pick one up for around forty quid, at its height they were changing hands for almost two hundred.

"They're calling my kind of music the new punk"

Another aspect of DJs making music is the copyright infringements of re-using music from other records. It works like this: you find a piece of music – anything from a single sound to several bars of a drum beat – that takes your fancy, record it into a sampler and use it to make your own music from. It's a bit like playing musical pick 'n mix, and it's already resulted in a number of court cases and many arguments between musicians.

"They're calling my kind of music the new punk," comments Tim. "It's true in a way because a lot of what I've done is 'copyright anarchy'. I think it's slightly more extreme than what punk was doing but I don't understand why the 'real' musicians are trying to stop it. Although I never went to any punk gigs I never thought punk was bad; the general vibe was fun. And I think this should be treated in the same way. It shouldn't be a scapegoat for musos."

So what of the idea of DJs making music with other peoples' records and computers - is it just a passing fad?

"Records like *Beat Dis* will sit in history as a record of the eighties," comes Tim's confident reply. "If in ten years you say to someone 'tell me a record of the eighties' I bet the answer will be one of the DJ records."

"Beat dis will go down in history"

And what about computer games - are they destined to go the same way as Glen Madeiros? Well, if it's anything to go by, Tim Simenon's *Megablast* has just been adopted by Mirrorsoft as the music to accompany *Xenon II* - which is on release now! So it looks like they'll be around long after Cliff Richard!



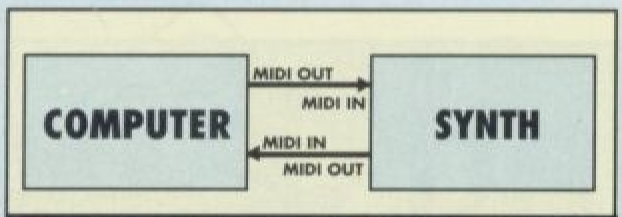
MUSIC LESSONS

MIDI MADNESS

Today the acronym "MIDI" is familiar to almost all musicians, certainly to all those who have come into contact with the hi-tech end of music making. For those of you who haven't met it before, listen carefully, I'll be asking questions later.

MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface and is the system used by modern synthesizers, samplers and drum machines to communicate with each other. It's also used by dedicated hardware sequencers to send control data to these instruments to automate a musical performance. Anything a dedicated sequencer can do, a computer, running the appropriate software, can also do and the story doesn't end there. An Atari ST, PC, Amiga or Archimedes running the correct software can be persuaded to perform a whole host of other useful chores, such as patch editing, librarianship, mix automation and hoovering your bedroom. That's why you're reading about it in the pages of a computer mag. (Just in case you wondered.)

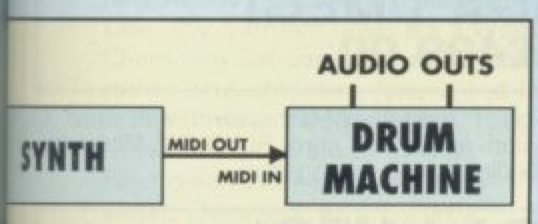
In the early seventies synthesizers were little more than glorified electronic keyboards (which may go some way to explaining why early seventies music was so crap). Their range was as limited as Jason Donovan's and they tended to be used as a fun gimmick rather than a serious musical instrument. With such limited use compatibility was not an issue, which was very fortunate because, inspired by a mood of non co-operation, manufacturers had filled the market with an array of systems for communicating the pitch of a note. There were 'S-triggers' and 'V-triggers', 'one volt/octave control systems' and 'volts-to-Hertz control systems', not to mention car rentals; all very clever and all very incompatible. About as much use as a tin without a can opener.



2 SYNTHESIZER PATCH EDITING USING A COMPUTER

Synths developed along with the rest of the computer industry, particularly as a consequence of digital technology. With the introduction of polyphony (being able to play more than one note at the same time), velocity sensitivity (the sound responding to how hard you hit the key) and programmability (being able to recall the sounds you had created from a memory bank rather than by resetting all the panel controls) synths were seriously musical. But they were still rather like that tin of beans. Programmable polysynths such as the Polymoog, Prophet 5, Oberheim OBX and Jupiter all demanded a more sophisticated comms system, but did they have the same system? Did they heck as like!! Roland had its own Digital Communications Bus, Oberheim had its Performance System... need I go on? Musicians had to either opt for one manufacturer's gear or accept that their instruments were only ever going to work in isolation. Failing that it was back to the banjo and the George Formby songbook.

Well we've all been there before, said the man with the Betamax video recorder and BSB squariel. Enter Dave Smith of Sequential Circuits. Now Dave is a smart chap (the sort of chap who bought a VHS video recorder) and he suggested an internationally agreed digital communications standard would really make life a whole lot easier. Obvious really, so obvious that no-one else had even thought of it.

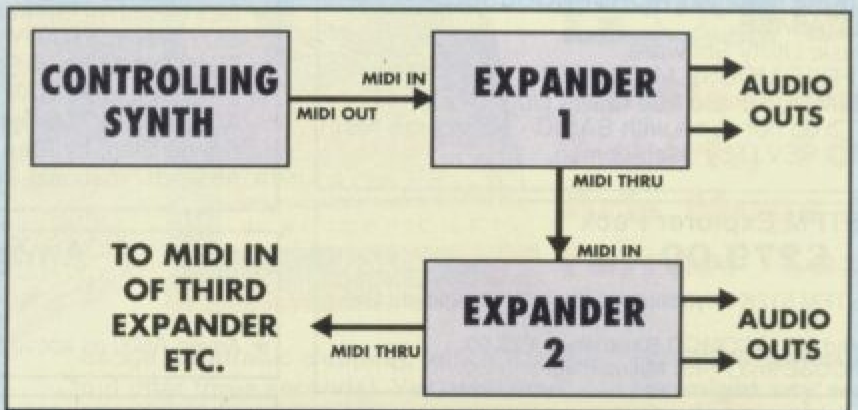


SYNTHESIZER CONTROLLING DRUM MACHINE

The IMA (International MIDI Association) was established to represent all concerned manufacturers and the first version of the MIDI spec was agreed with a corresponding body in Japan. The agreement was met with a chorus of "About bloody time too."

For the first time any suitably equipped piece of electronic music-making kit could talk to any other. Or so said the theory. There were teething problems in the early days, and there are still areas of doubt and uncertainty - even the technical spec sheet is open to different interpretation. But on the whole MIDI works, and it's certainly an improvement on what had gone before.

Now we've established how it came about I'll explain exactly how MIDI is organised. 16 MIDI channels are available over the MIDI bus, and each instrument or device can be assigned one of these to carry the control data intended for it. At the time of its conception 16 channels seemed to be a generous number, but many systems now offer a number of individually addressable MIDI buses to accomodate more complex instrument set ups. Typically a MIDI equipped device will carry three 180 degree, five-pin DIN sockets to allow connection to the system. These are usually marked 'MIDI In', 'MIDI Out' and 'MIDI Thru'. There are deviations from this; the Atari ST has a non-standard combined MIDI Out and Thru, and shoulder-slung MIDI controllers only require a MIDI Out. Make any sense yet? (*No actually! Ed*)



3 "CHAINING" OF MIDI DEVICES

The basic system works as follows : MIDI In receives all data transmitted on the MIDI bus and allows a specific device to read any data intended for it; MIDI Thru re-transmits all data arriving at the MIDI In, plus any information that the device in question may be instructed to add to it; MIDI Out sends data generated within the device out onto the MIDI buss, it does not (ordinarily) repeat data arriving at the MIDI In. There, simple isn't it?

Using these three sockets it's possible to connect, say, a drum machine to a synthesizer so that drum sounds can be played from the keyboard (synth MIDI Out to drum machine MIDI In- Fig 1), or to connect an ST to a synth for patch editing (synth MIDI Out to ST MIDI In; ST MIDI Out to synth MIDI In- Fig 2). The MIDI Thru is used to build a comprehensive MIDI system. A keyboard synthesizer can be connected to a number of "expander" modules (other synths, samplers, etc.) by connecting the controlling synths' MIDI Out to the first expander's MIDI In, the first expander's MIDI Thru to the second expander's MIDI In (Fig 3) and so on. Have a look at the diagrams if you're still a little confused.

A glance at the paperwork that defines the MIDI specifications will tell you that, as well as note information, MIDI is capable of handling such things as pitch bend, patch changes, bulk dumps and timing. But don't get the idea that, because the MIDI comms standard is capable of handling all this, all MIDI-equipped devices are capable of implementing it. (*Wouldn't dream of it. Ed*) Certain devices only have a use for certain commands, other devices may not be sophisticated enough to take advantage of all that MIDI can control. The one advantage you'll have as a computer user is that the computer is going to be more flexible than any dedicated hardware device, and if you're writing your own software, the only limitations are those imposed on the MIDI implementation of the hardware on the receiving end.

Remember MIDI is still in its infancy. Software writers are continually trying to meet musicians' needs with it and offer their own ideas for its use in the creation of music. All you need for a piece of the action is the incentive and a little information. That's where we come in, watch this space.

A MUDDLY MIDI GLOSSARY

Bulk Dump
Not as rude as it sounds. Sending System Exclusive data from a synth to a computer and vice versa.

Comms
Nickname for serial communications of which MIDI is one variety.

CV
Short for control voltage. Forerunner of MIDI as keyboard to synth control method.

DIN
German technical standard for things like leads, film speeds etc.

Expander
Synth without keyboard operated via MIDI.

Librarian
Computer program which stores patches from a synth on a computer disk via a MIDI link.

Mix Automation
Using MIDI to automate the movement of the faders on a mixing desk in a recording studio.

Patch
A sound on a synth.

Patch Change
Changing the sound on your synth, either from the control panel or through MIDI.

Patch Editor
Computer program which edits the sounds on your synth through MIDI.

Pitch Bend
Bending a note using the pitch wheel. This movement can be recorded using a sequencer program, retaining the feel of a performance.

COMPO

VROOOOM!

WIN! WIN! WIN!





A World Championship Scalextric Set



PLUS

10 Electronic Arts T-shirts, 10 Electronic Arts Mugs And 20 Ferrari 'Logo Badges'

Cripes look at those Grand Prix!

No-one's too old to own a Scalextric set. Jackie Stewart's got one. So has Murray Walker. And if you play your cards right, you could have one too! Courtesy of Electronic Arts who is releasing *Ferrari Formula One* any moment now! It's a World Champion Set complete with Ferrari racing cars, chicanes, fences and four lanes of motorised madness.

No-one's too old to own an Electronic Arts T-shirt and mug either. Electronic Arts T-shirt's are oh-so handy on those days where the sun is shining bright. And mugs - well, what more can one say: how else do you get your steaming hot 'char' from teapot to mouth? Well, okay, you could get third degree burns on the palms of your cupped hands - but you know what we mean.

And of course, no-one's too old to own a super swank Ferrari metal badge. Some people are too rich to need one, it's true, but that's simply because they've got the real McCoy throbbing away beneath their undercarriage. But that's their look-out. These badges are guaranteed 'vandal proof'. (And they don't run out of petrol).

Anyway There's The Prize Description, But Who Wins What?

Okay. Well one (count 'em: one) first prize winner will get the Scalextric set. (Raucous applause).

Ten (count 'em: ten) second prize winners will get a double pack of one Electronic Arts T-shirt and one Mug. (Mild applause).

And twenty (count 'em: twenty) runners up will each receive a Ferrari badge. (Sporadic clapping, which fizzles out after three seconds). Yes, we know it's not as good as the Scalextric, but it'll serve you right for not being 'first out of the postbag'!

Quick - How Do I Enter... And What Do I Do?

It's all quite simple really: as long as you know a mite about motor-racing, that is. Just answer these following questions...

(1) Here are the noses of three famous racing drivers: Nigel Mansell, Alain Prost and Stirling Moss. But which one of these noses belongs to which racing driver?

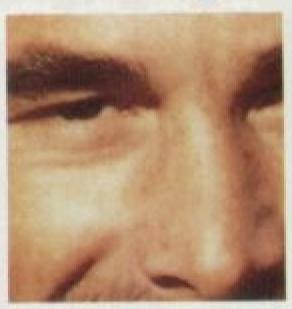
(2) What famous racing commentator might say something like this? "And...it's...Mansell...closing...up...on... Warwick Mansell...overtaking...on... the...inside...of...Warwick! Wait a minute...that's not Warwick! And that's not Mansell either! Oh no- they've both crashed, anyway!"

(3) Who's the better shot in clay-pigeon shooting: Jackie Stewart or Nigel Mansell?

(4) Who's the better 'actor': Jackie Stewart or Nigel Mansell?

Done That?

Okay then fill in the answers on the coupon below and send the result (or a photocopy) to Vroom Competition, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. And make sure your entries cross the finishing line by 30th November, or they'll be sent straight to the pits.



1



2



3

RULES

- Any employees of Dennis Oneshots Ltd. or Electronic Arts caught trying to enter this compo will have the area under their fingernails slashed with razor-blades.
- Any entries received after 30th November will be burnt, and we'll dance on the ashes!
- The Editors decision is FINAL. No whingers please.

Check out my answers below:

(**1**) I know my noses...

Nigel Mansell's is ________ Alain Prost's is ________ Stirling Moss's is ________

(**2**) The commentator is ________

(**3**) The best shot is ________

(**4**) And as for the best actor it's definitely ________

If I'm first out of the bag send my prize to

NAME ________

ADDRESS ________

ZIP CODE ________

DOSH EATERS

***Matt Bielby* (Editor of *Your Sinclair* but don't hold that against him!) gives his expert arcade advice on how to spend a penny (well quite a few pennies actually!) wisely...**

DRAGON BREED

Irem/30p a go

Yes, it's that hoary old standby, a progressive horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. Sitting in a very ordinary looking, non-dedicated cabinet. It's not all that frenetic or flashy, and the colours used are rather sober greens and dark blues. Basically it does nothing to draw attention to itself – so why is it surrounded by so many people? Could it be because it's seriously excellent??

Blooming right it could! *Dragon Breed* is the natural successor to *R-Type* in more ways than one. Designed by Irem – who brought us that seminal shoot 'em up – for one thing, it shares the same consistent high quality in both gameplay and graphic design.

You play a little chap riding a long, worm-like dragon (the natural successor to *R-Type's* snake jobbies) taking on oodles of mythical, monsterous bad guys. These come in all shapes and sizes – from man-sized to end of level meanies that take minutes to show their full extent across numerous screens – and are universally well designed and animated. Both the human hero – who can dismount at some points to cause maximum devastation – and his mount are armed and can pick up extra fire power pods, but separating the two is risky.

You see, as in *R-Type*, the central sprite (in that case the space ship, here the man) remains vulnerable no matter how many add-ons you get. The dragon's curly body can be twisted around to protect him in most situations, provided you think ahead in time, but the natural tendency is to forget it's the little man you need to protect and not the dragon's head - with potentially devastating results. It's not the flashiest shoot 'em up ever but you'd be hard pushed to name another that plays as well. Bound to be a birrova massive arcade hit destined for conversion to 16-bit machines sometime next year. Christmas 1990 all formats number one, anyone?







THE SCORE

We're here to point you in the right direction of what's likely to be a pretty good game so you don't have to waste loads of moolah just trying it out. We've kept the ratings pretty simple. One overall mark out of five stars (well actually five Space Invaders) reflecting not graphics or playability in particular – though they're obviously the two most important criteria - but our general overall response to a game. For example five Space Invaders indicate a super spiffo game and a single alien – er, a bit of a crap one...





You'll have to dismount to
ollect some of the ground
ased icons. Keep the dragon
verhead and you'll have
ome deterrant, but be careful
your little man is well armed
ut he's very vulnerable on
is tod.

The dragon's curly body can
e used in a couple of ways.
Twist him up, and you can
reate a devastating whiplash
ffect with his tail, but
oremost it's an impenetrable
rotection against all comers.
He doesn't move that fast
ough, so you'd do well to
hink ahead and remember
he attack

Weapons aren't quite as
umerous as in *R-Type*, but
hey're just as fun. With
aximum power dragon
reath, gained by picking up
hree red icons, *(maybe he
hould try Listerine. Ed)* and
ownward firing lightning
olts, three blue ones, you're
eally cooking. Or at least, the
nemies are.

SPECIAL AGENT

Data East/30p a go

This one's pretty cheeky! The worst bit is the high score screen – virtually a digitised version of *The Living Daylights* poster - but there's hardly a moment where you don't spot some new on-screen James Bond reference/rip off (take your pick.) You play a fairly large Timothy Dalton sprite (in obligatory DJ of course) taking on oodles of terrorist bad guys around famous Washington D.C. monuments, amongst other places. Many of the levels are *Rolling Thunder*-ish horizontal scrollers, with 'James' taking out ninjas and musclemen with his trusty Walther PPK (or even more trusty giant rifle) but there's some rather more interesting stuff in here too.



▲Oops! 007 seems to have forgotten which country he's meant to be from!

How about the opening freefall sequence, a vertical scroller moving down the screen as you take on baddies while you drop, before popping your Stars and Stripes chute? Or the high speed motorbike chase where you're assaulted by men in jet packs? Or even the shark infested underwater scenes? Something in here for everyone and - dare I say it? - capturing the flavour of 007 far better than any of Domark's efforts.

▼Guess what? Could Data East have been watching *Thunderball* by any chance?



WILLOW *Cap Com/30p a go*

Well, it's a pretty ancient licence, I grant you, and the movie didn't exactly set the world alight in the first place, but I'm glad to see this 'cos – and I know everyone else will disagree – I think *Willow* was a bit of a corker of a film. Non-fans will find there are plenty of other reasons why this is worth a look.

Graphically it's lovely – very state of the art with smooth animation, large sprites and colourful backdrops. The two main characters - you alternate between playing the stumpy, magic firing title role and the larger, more athletic rogue Madmartigan (both look remarkably like their big screen



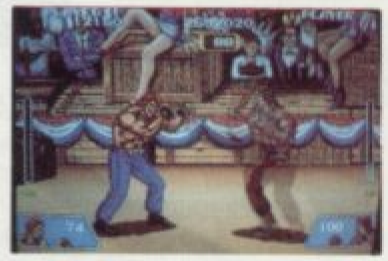
▲This old magician lurks in the extra weapons shop sequence. Here you can spend the gold you nabbed off dead enemies. A half pound of magic bolts, my good man!

counterparts) and the gameplay is very faithful to the plot of the film. Faithful, that is, for what is basically a 1989 remake of Capcom's ancient platform and ladders shoot 'em up *Ghosts And Goblins*. Nothing new then but well done all the same. Experts may complain the gameplay isn't perhaps up to the best platform and ladders standards, but the visuals certainly are.

CRIME CITY

Taito/30p a go

This does for *Miami Vice* what *Secret Agent* did for 007. Two suit-wearing cops roam around shooting and punching out drug dealers *RoboCop* style. Occasional *Op Wolfy* 3D firefights, but most of the action is horizontally scrolling, the highlight being when the boys jump across the roofs of moving cars. Hilarious!



VIOLENCE FIGHT

Taito/30p a go

The world's biggest sprites slug it out in comic book street fights, with silly words ('dogon', 'goon') appearing on screen occasionally and even sillier fighting moves. Fun, with the highlight being the walls splintering as you fall on them.

TWIN HAWK

Taito/20p a go

WW2 vertical scroller with a trillion and one planes, ships, tanks and even bigger tanks lining up to be machine gunned to death by a tiny Spitfire lookalike. Tricky, but too similar to *Flying Shark* et al to get the pulse racing.

UN SQUADRON

Capcom/30p a go

Three fighter pilots and their jets go up against all sorts of enemy tanks, aircraft and the like, in a horizontal shoot 'em up reminiscent of *Silkworm*. A weird shop sequence allows you to buy extra weapons for your F-14, F-20 or Thunderbolt, including things Tom Cruise never dreamed of! A neat top panel shows the pilot grimace in pain when hit.

review

SHORTS

SHUFFLEPUCK CAFÉ



Domark/Bröderbund/£19.99

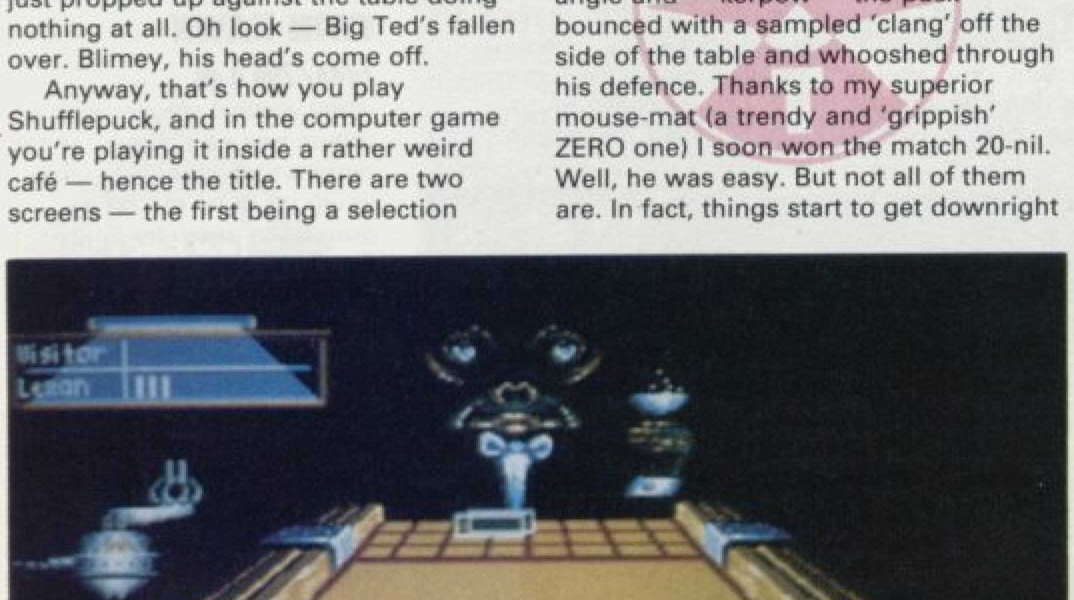
Duncan: In case you're not familiar with the actual game of Shufflepuck itself, we'll tell you about it. It's a two player game set around a table, with one player seated at one end of the table, and another player seated at the other. Both chums are 'armed' with wooden blocks (about the size of blackboard rubbers) and there's a 'puck' waiting to be hit. The two players, in this case let's call them Humpty and Big Ted, have to strike the puck, sending it down to the opposing end of the table where hopefully a 'goal' will be scored. If either of the chums is clever enough, they'll utilise the fact that the edges of the 'table' are raised — allowing the puck to be bounced off at cunning angles. Unfortunately, neither Humpty or Big Ted is clever enough. In fact they're both just propped up against the table doing nothing at all. Oh look — Big Ted's fallen over. Blimey, his head's come off.

Anyway, that's how you play Shufflepuck, and in the computer game you're playing it inside a rather weird café — hence the title. There are two screens — the first being a selection screen, where you can choose which of the nine rather bizarre opponents you wish to 'battle' (there's a weird lizard bloke, a robot and more and each of them vary in skill), or maybe you'd like to plump for the tournament mode, where you take on each character in succession. This choice having been made, it's onto the 'business' screen, where the game takes place. I decided to take on the little spotty chap with the glasses: he didn't look quite as 'handy' as the others. So, having selected him with the mouse-pointer, it was onto the actual matchplay screen.

Sure enough there he was at the other end of the table looking all sort of eager, wholesome and annoying. Game on! My serve. So I whizzed my mouse across the mat at a stunningly rakish angle and — kerpow — the puck bounced with a sampled 'clang' off the side of the table and whooshed through his defence. Thanks to my superior mouse-mat (a trendy and 'grippish' ZERO one) I soon won the match 20-nil. Well, he was easy. But not all of them are. In fact, things start to get downright impossible when you get to Bejin (the female refugee from the Addams Family, who has 'spook serving tactics'), or Biff (the aggresive Biker).

If the opponents aren't tough enough for you (or are too hard, if you're a bit useless) loads of the in-game elements can be 'tweaked'. You can change the size of your bat, alter the friction levels and even summon up a block that moves around in the middle of the playing area generally getting in the way and helping you to score billions of own-goals. The first contestant to score 20 is the winner. Oh, and the game's totally controlled by mouse, so if your mouse-mat's a bit crap you might find yourself in a bit of a squiff. We suggest you invest in a rather trendy and extremely 'grippish' ZERO Mouse Mat they cost about a fiver, and will be available SOON!

On the ST *Shufflepuck Café* is an extremely simple game that's been implemented brilliantly. And very originally. There are loads of little touches, like the sampled comments you get from the different characters when you beat them — or alternative ones when they beat you. One of the opponents (Lexan the Lounge Lizard) actually gets progressively more sloshed as he's playing, which means he, er, gets more useless. The puck is nicely animated and moves blimming quickly, and the learning curve is one that breaks you in gently, then suddenly



By jingo, this opponent seems a trifle squiffy in the head — that's his twentieth glass of bubbly so far tonight. A victory for me could be in the offing here (unless his liver's made out of J-cloths).



"Hello. Erm. Can anyone tell me where the toilet is please?

lets you have it in between the eyes with both barrels.

The Amiga version is almost exactly the same as the ST version, but with an extra little music ditty bunged on the loading screen and slightly slower accessing speed for the sampled speech (we're only talking in pico-seconds though).

As for the PC version... well... um... there isn't one yet. And though there are plans to do a version, they're not exactly definite — sorry. (But you can still get a ZERO mouse mat!)

My one quibble is on the subject of lastability — I just don't know how long you'll stick with *Shufflepuck* before it goes on 'the pile'. Mind you, it's the sort of game that'll be fished out again (and again): so it's got lastability of sorts. Just make sure your mouse-mat's as good as the ZERO 'Trendy And Grip-pish' one, which'll be out soon for around five quid.

ST Score

GRAPHICS 87	ADDICTIVENESS 70	OVERALL 83
SOUND 90	EXECUTION 87	

Amiga Score

GRAPHICS 87	ADDICTIVENESS 70	OVERALL 82
SOUND 84	EXECUTION 87	

APB

Tengen/£19.99

Duncan: A game where you have to play a traffic cop? Blimey. Don't talk to me about traffic cops, I'm always getting done. Maybe it's my car, maybe it's just me. (*It's both. Ed*). Anyway, it's great to turn the tables for once, and be in control of a 'rozzer' — officer Bob in this case — and pootle around arresting all and sundry.

APB is a viewed from above scrolling road game, in which you play a traffic-cop. The idea, as with real life traffic-cops, is to nick anyone in sight — and to make your life a little easier Tengen has colour-coded each of the cars involved, and allocated certain 'crimes' to certain hues (yellow cars are drunk drivers, red



Yes, yes, I can see what you want me to do today Chief — but I personally fancy nicking that bloke with the flashy Mercedes Sport down Shakespeare Road!

cars are something else etc).

You start the game, however, at driving-school. There are no cars around, apart from yours — and you have to follow some arrows around the police compound within a time limit and 'book' a certain number of stationary traffic cones.

The way to book people (or, erm, traffic cones) is quite simple. In front of your patrol car is a small steering-wheel shaped doofer. If you're travelling slowly it'll be near the front of your bonnet while at speed it moves further away from you. The trick is to position it over whatever you want to 'nick' and hold down the fire button — which can be a bit tricky on the later levels when you're motoring at mach nine with about 30,000 trillion other cars on the road.

At the beginning of *APB* you can select which 'day' you want to play from, which is the same as saying 'choose your level'. Day One is the driving school bit mentioned earlier, while Day Ten is, erm, quite hard. There's a notepad to the right of the screen which serves you in several ways.

One: it gives you a running tally of your 'revenue' (i.e. the dosh you collect for successful 'nicks')

Two: There's a 'demerit' bar. Demerits are awarded every time you pull over an innocent driver (or when you crash). Ten demerits and it's game over time.

Three: There's a timer: keep your eyes on the clock. Well — actually, keep your eyes on the road.



Right, you're well and truly nicked me old beauty. And be warned — when I saw *The Offence* (the Sean Connery film), I thought it was a comedy!

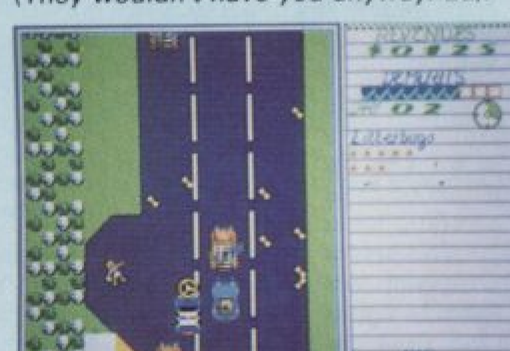
Four: How much petrol have you got left? There's a bar at the bottom to tell you.

Five: Your 'arrest quota' is here as well. It tells you how many of which type of driver you've got to pull. Pull them all and you get a dosh bonus back at the station and move to the next level.

On the later levels you have to catch drug-pushers, and they give you a right old chase. You have to stick your 'siren icon' over their cars quite a few times to get them to pull over, so ramming them off the road isn't a bad idea. Having busted one of these fiends, you get sproinged to a totally different screen where you have to try and 'shake' a confession out of the offender. It's a joystick waggler! Get a confession and you get a cash bonus! (*And a broken joystick. Ed*)

At the moment only the ST version of APB is available on which the graphics are fine, as is the scrolling (which is pretty important, obviously, in this kind of a game). There's a lot to keep you busy, with 'power-ups' to obtain (extra speed, extra acceleration and extra brakes) and petrol and extra time to be aquired. But where are these things when you need them? Nowhere near you, that's for certain — and driving the wrong way down a one way street is often the only way to get to them before your timer runs down.

APB on the ST is a good conversion of a good arcade game. It's great fun, pretty hard – and the easy access to the different levels keeps you coming back for more. I'm off to join the police. (Only joking). (*They wouldn't have you anyway. Ed*).



You're nicked. And you're nicked. So are you. You're nicked too. You're really nicked. You're nicked as well sunshine. Nicked, nicked, nicked, nicked, nicked...(Continued on page 109). (*You can't, it's been nicked. Ed*).

ST Score – Amiga coming soon

GRAPHICS 80	ADDICTIVENESS 85	OVERALL 80
SOUND 75	EXECUTION 77	

PAPERBOY

Elite/£19.99 ST & Amiga/£24.99 PC

Neil: It's been a long time since I was a paperboy, actually. In fact the last paper I delivered had something about a male Prime Minister. (*Chamberlain? Ed*).

In *Paperboy*, you are (surprise, surprise) a paperboy. As you go on your paper round in small town America, you



You've been mowed down you blockhead. Now if I had a pound for every *Advanced Lawnmower Simulator* rip off I saw...

come up against all the hazards which confront any def young lad on a bike in the morning.

Dogs, joggers, drunks, men digging up the road, manhole covers and careless motorists.

You've got to deliver your paper, The Sun (yurch!) to all the houses with a Sun box outside. Not only have you got to hit the box from a moving bike, but you've also got to avoid all the obstacles as well. At the end of each level, called Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday etc., you have to ride through the park at the end of the road, throwing your remaining papers at targets as you move along (pretty realistic, huh?) and



Erm...If I were you I'd scarper sharpish before Mr Angry gets up and shoves your bike down your throat.

making it to the finishing line before time runs out. I never once made it to the line, even at maximum speed, so it's kind of impossible for me to tell you what comes next.

On the ST, the graphics are good — very much like the arcade machine — and unlike a lot of coin-op conversions, this one actually plays like it as well. It's flippin' 'ard! The sounds are authentic



A strong possibility for the Front Page News section of *Yikes!*

and the tune is catchy. (I know a lot of people who play games just for the tune, y'know.)

The graphics on the PC version are nice enough, a bit blocky on CGA, but very nice on EGA, more like the actual arcade machine. The sound is thankfully absent, I don't think I could take the thing beeping all the way through the game, with most of the sound reserved for the tune at the start and sound effects.

Okay, so that's the review, now here's a joke. What happened to the paperboy? One day the wind blew him away! Ha ha ha ha... Okay, please yourself.

ST Score

GRAPHICS 80	ADDICTIVENESS 75	OVERALL 86
SOUND 90	EXECUTION 80	

PC Score – Amiga coming soon

GRAPHICS 75	ADDICTIVENESS 60	OVERALL 79
SOUND 90	EXECUTION 80	

H.A.T.E.

Gremlin/£19.99

Jonathan: Probably the first thing to get out of the way is what *H.A.T.E.* actually stands for. I'm reliably informed that *Hostile All-Terrain Encounter* is the expanded version, although it sounds a bit contrived to me. The encounter in question takes place at a training school for budding astronauts, in which they get to put a variety of vehicles through their paces over a series of *Zaxxon*-style diagonally scrolling landscapes.

The first vehicle to come into your posession looks uncannily like a 1960's Russian fighter plane, but it seems to work okay. As it chugs along, going up and down as well as from left to right, formations of aliens buzz round taking pot-shots at you. Some appear from the top of the screen, others from holes in the ground *Xenon*-style. Fortunately you are armed appropriately so they present no problem, as long as you can judge how high they are flying (the shadows help here).

While all this is going on there's something else to consider. Dotted



The plane has the advantage that you can dive down underneath things if you want to. Don't worry about hitting the ground – it won't.

about on the ground are lots of what look like nuclear power stations. Blow them apart and you'll be able to pick up the little thingies inside, which then tag along behind you. The more thingies you collect, the more lives you'll have when (if) you reach the next level. If you do reach the next level you'll find yourself in control of a different kind of vehicle – first a tank (which won't go up and down obviously) and then a hovercraft. And then? I wouldn't want to spoil the surprise. (*He means he couldn't get that far. Ed*)

I've only seen the ST version, but just on the basis of that I think I'm safe in saying that what *H.A.T.E.* sets out to do, it does very well. The scrolling scrolls smoothly, the graphics look smart, if a little unadventurous, and the balance of playability is, erm, balanced. I especially welcomed not having to go right back to the start of the game on dying — you just go back to the previous level to pick up some more thingies.

An accomplished but uneventful scrolling shooter which will keep you playing until the bitter end. The game's only fault is in being slightly bland. Other than that *H.A.T.E.* is a very enjoyable blast, and one which I'll certainly be returning to.

ST Score – Amiga and PC coming soon

GRAPHICS 72	ADDICTIVENESS 80	OVERALL 78
SOUND 70	EXECUTION 76	

déjà vu

RVF HONDA

MicroStyle/£24.99 Amiga

Sean: *RVF Honda* is described as a simulation rather than an arcade game, but does include elements of both genres. On the arcade front, the colourful graphics wouldn't be out of place on *Super Hang On* or a game of that ilk. Sound is the usual digitised vroomy noises, and scrolling is smooth. The illusion of speed is well created and since you are concerned with what's happening in the race, the trackside decorations are for the most part ignored. Unless you're wrapping the 'bike around them, that is.

Prettiness aside, it's predominantly a racing simulation, and there's a lot more to it than whizzing around collecting flies on your visor. There are over twenty tracks to master, and three skill levels to choose from.

To begin with, the race is at Clubman level and you must compete on eight tracks and finish first overall in order to progress to National level and then International level. If you win this, you become World Champion, and presumably lead a life of drunken debauchery with page three bimbos, or have metal bits fitted to replace the bones left by the track at Donnington.

As in any self-respecting simulation, each track requires its own approach, on some you can belt round in sixth gear, whilst in others you may barely touch fifth. Each race begins with the opportunity to practice, allowing you to become familiarised with the track, work out the best gearing for certain bends, and also to determine your grid position.

Once on the grid it's down to your driving skills and timing next to that of the other racers. In addition, there are also oil patches, puddles and hills to contend with. Either will lose you vital seconds, but falling can also ruin your speedo and rev counter, or damage the gears or steering, making the bike perform about as well as Elvis Presley.

Gears must be used, and are implemented by using the fire key and pressing forward to step up the gears, and pulling back while pressing fire to come down. Unfortunately, it is sometimes necessary to change down the gears as you approach a bend, and because of the joystick configuration I found it tricky to change down and steer the bike round a bend, so I spent a lot of time headbutting trees and collecting grass stains.

Once I was getting to grips, keeping up with the pack and occasionally winning, I found *RVF Honda* to be quite an addictive game. Chasing and overtaking other riders, especially on the bends, looks impressive, and certainly gives you an exhilaratingly smug feeling. Most of the time, however, you are out on your own, only occasionaly meeting another rider. This makes it a little boring at times, and whilst the simulation might be being true to life in this aspect, it can prove a bit of a drag.

Overall, *RVF* is an attractive game. The sonics and graphics, whilst not being anything revolutionary, complement the gameplay more than adequately. And as it's the involved gameplay which makes the game, *RVF Honda* shouldn't disappoint anyone who wants a decent 'bike racing simulator for their Amiga.



'Our hero' demonstrates how to take a corner using just two wheels and one keecap. Yaroo!

Amiga Score

GRAPHICS 79 ADDICTIVENESS 78
SOUND 85 EXECUTION 79
OVERALL 81

CALIFORNIA GAMES

Epyx/£24.99 ST

Jonathan: Totally 'tubular', 'radical dude' that I am, *California* shouldn't have presented any problems to me. And indeed it didn't. Within seconds of loading I was soaking up the sun, surf, sand and the rest of it. As for the game, it's along exactly the same lines as all Epyx's other *Games* games — loads of little gamettes which can be played in a variety of ways, ideally all in one go with a few friends to compete against.

The simplest thing to do now would be to list the sub-games, so here goes...

Half-Pipe Skateboarding: Skate around in a U-shaped half-pipe performing as many stunts as poss. Not bad, but hardly riveting.

Foot Bag: One of the best — try to keep a bag in the air without using your hands, if possible looking as 'bio' as you can. Avoid hitting the passing seagulls.

Surfing: I couldn't get the hang of this one. You surf, basically, and attempt to do it without falling in.

Roller Skating: Little more than a scrolling avoid 'em up. There are things to skate round, things to jump over and while you're at it perform 360° turns to score more points.

BMX Bike Riding: Erm, a scrolling bike 'em up? Your job this time is to pedal through the undulating course without falling off. Takes some practice, and not one of my favourites.

Flying Disk: The final event, better known as Frisbie Chucking. Satisfyingly easy - just throw the frisbie as far as possible and then try and catch it again.

Not a bad little bunch, altogether. There are plenty of 'nice touches', and while the graphics may not be exactly 'awesome' (these words are all defined in the instructions by the way), the sound manages to encompass plenty of little ditties and the odd sample.

As always, it's much better with a friend or two, although once you've mastered each event the game could become a little wearisome. I enjoyed it, though, and it's definitely my fave *Games* game to date.



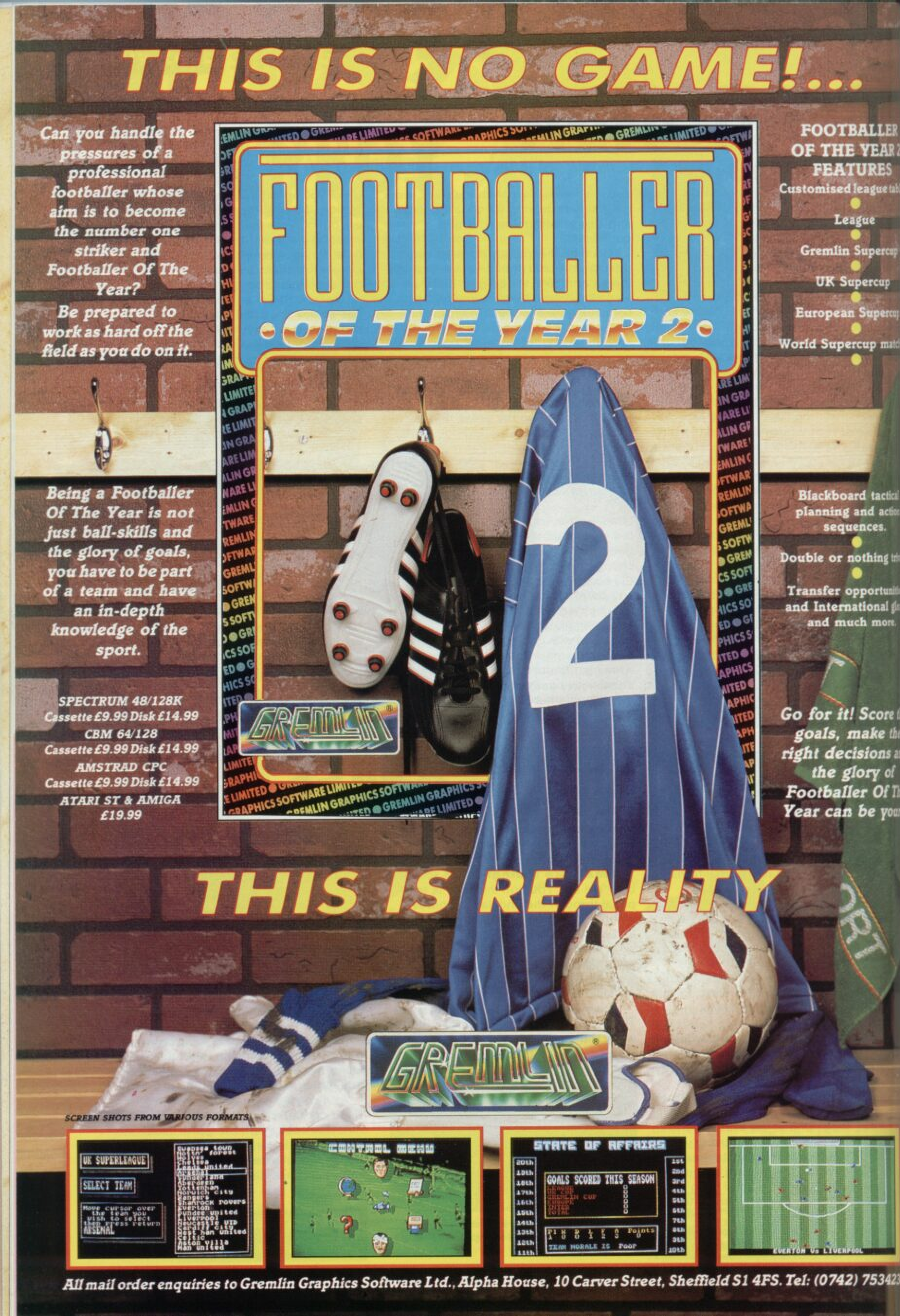
The fact that the waters are shark infested does little to improve one's confidence.



The trick is to perform as many cartwheels, jumps etc. before you get seasick.

ST Score

GRAPHICS 69 ADDICTIVENESS 75
SOUND 73 EXECUTION 80
OVERALL 76


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CRYSTAL TIPS*

*AND ALISTAIR

Well, *David McCandless* actually! And he's bringing you a lot more than just tips. There's a complete map of *Mr Heli*, a complete solution to *Spherical*, Binky Berkmann's Debriefing plus loads of POKEs and hacks too! Shame there's no Pot Noodle really!

> **SPOT TIP**
> **XENON II (Imageworks)**
> **Buy it!**

Games are getting harder. No if-ing or but-ing or 'I'm washing my hair tonight' about it – games today are tougher than they were three years ago. In those days, any shandy-drinking badminton player from the South could swagger in from an evening of amateur dramatics and complete the latest 'difficult' shoot 'em up. Nowadays you have to be some kind of bronzed red neck, with a palpo-chest and a penchant for driving up to the Ayatollah's 'pad' in Iran in a Penguin-books van, to be able to get past the first level on any game.

But tougher games breed tougher players (biologically possible or not) and here at ZERO, we have the toughest, most bronzed gameplayers with almost scarlet necks, and a penchant for even worse jokes about Salman Rushdie. They'll be producing a mammoth wad of hints, tips and maps every month, backed up by a regular dose of Jon "My cerebellum is the size of Uganda" North's POKE's page. We'll be gliding through the easy games, cruising through the fairly hard ones, and then hardly breaking step as we march through those real tough buggers.

But enough ego-tripping, since we're not quite as brilliant as you must think we are. We're actually going to need your help. Not that we can't handle the sheer volume of games - oh no! It's just that er. . . just that. . . we're all a bit crap really. (*I had my suspicions. Ed.*)

What we basically need is a huge tidal-wave of tips from you every month. You could even get together with a few 'chums' to form a tip-squad, or you can go it alone and claim all the glory for yourself. And glory there will be. Lots of it.

So if you've played a (fairly) recent game to death, discovered a cunning cheat-mode, come across a strange effect or esoteric secret level on a game, figured out the Alistair bit of the column title, or if you've just got a few ideas on what you'd like to see in the future, then drop me a line. **David McCandless** is the (unpronouncable) name, and the address is **ZERO, Crystal Tips (and Alistair), 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.** I *will* be hearing from you.

> **SPOT TIP**
> **LEONARDO (Starbytes)**
> **The level 10 code is *Emmentaler* (typical Germanic password).**



PHOBIA

Now this Imagework's shoot 'em up is hard, as hard as nails in fact. Steven Hill just managed to scrape the surface of the game to extract these tips. If your *Phobic* skills can rival or even surpass Steven's then send, send, SEND!

- Always start on the planet and not the moon. There is a very short supply of shield/weapon up-grades and you'll be decimated pretty sharpish if you try.
- Shooting an entire enemy wave yields a big blue bulky shield. This will seem to have no effect at first, but will in fact gradually increase your firepower. Your lasers will go further, you'll have diagonal 'bombing' shots, and life will be easier all round.
- Always, if possible, go to the moon after murdering the end of level mutha.
- Along the level you'll spot small white circles. These are the shield-generators that protect the mega-mutha at the end of the level. The more circles you shoot, the less tough and tenacious the crustacean will be. If you shoot very little or none at all (shandy-drinker) then the alien won't even make an appearance, and you'll have to go right through the level (again).

TEETHING TROUBLES

There are some games these days that are not only hard to play but damn difficult to get into, too. In the future, this section will be devoted to giving you inferior players a head start in the tougher, meaner, less accessible games.

One such discouragingly complicated game is Activision's *Millenium 2.2* which conceals quite complex gameplay under its terribly nice graphics. Steven Hill (again) has delved into the game to help you get started.

Firstly turn on the Salogen Mk.1 – essential if you want to do anything. Next, go straight to the research lab and start investigating the Salogen Mk.2, remembering to turn the laboratory on. Then high tail it to the production lab and select a probe to construct. Now advance two days and back to the prod-lab. By this time the probe will be under construction. As soon as the probe is ready the research on the Salogen Mk.2 will be finished.

To conserve power during the production of the Mk.2 you must deactivate the Resource machine. Produce some Mk.2 and turn that on. Then advance time until the research is complete on the next Salogen. REMEMBER to reactivate the Resource machine.

Now start the production of the next Salogen and commence research on the one after that. Proceed like this sequaciously, (in order) advancing the time etc.

You'll quickly run through all the Salogens until you reach number IV which is faulty. This means you must repeat the production process from Mk.1 again, but you can be researching Mk.IV and beyond while this is going on.

Once all the energy elements have been examined, you must start researching the weaponry and then the transport - the moon is your oyster.

If you've played a game recently that was a tad 'obtuse' or slightly difficult to get started in, then send in your startup routine to the normal address, but label it TEETHING TROUBLES so I can file it properly.

crystal tips*
*and Alistair

SPHERICAL
THE COMPLETE* SOLUTION

We like *Spherical*. It's a gorgeously challenging game requiring brain-power, reflex, speed and agility. Not only that, but each screen is a stand alone puzzle, and can keep you pondering for days, weeks even. *James Clover* took a mere two *hours* to complete it.

LEVEL CODES

Single player codes:

LEVEL 09	RADAGAST
LEVEL 19	YARMAK
LEVEL 39	ORCSLAYER
LEVEL 59	SKYFIRE
LEVEL 75	MIRGAL

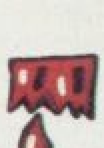
Two player codes:

LEVEL 09	GHANIMA
LEVEL 19	GLIEP
LEVEL 39	MOURNBLADE
LEVEL 59	JADAWIN
LEVEL 75	Er... ah...

GENERAL TIPS

- Always (and I repeat) *always* pause instantly on entering a new screen.
- The first thing to look for is the saftey of the ball. If it is poised on the brink of a precipice or just about to tumble into an inescapable trap, you will have to act fast and trap it, making it safe.
- Also check that five million ghosts aren't about to converge on you simultaneously.
- It's possible to remove blocks all around you, even diagonally up. The latter takes practice and timing but you can congratulate yourself on being a real ninja when you master it.
- Get two candles and your rotating sparkler turns white. Hold down fire and the ball will bounce randomly around the screen, killing things.
- Trapping monsters is an essential skill, requiring speed, precision, lightning reflexes, vast reserves of talent – and the jammiest of luck.
- If you're good enough (we are), you can jump a gap of three blocks.

THE NASTIES



DRIPS
These cunningly drip vitriol on you from above, following no set pattern. The best thing to do is climb up to a higher level with them and place a block directly under the drip. Or just make a dash in between plops.



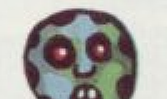
GHOSTS
These spectres dumbly move left and right and can be halted simply by plonking a block in their way. To put them out of action permanently, trap them at the point where they turn around.



PIXIES
Pixies stalk along platforms and fall down through gaps until they reach the bottom of the screen. Remember this when you start a screen. You can be lulled into a false sense of security by the empty platform next to you, only to have fifty leprechauns skydive onto your head.



BUBBLES
Bubbles are a pain – virtually indestructable, they only give you a pixel's space to travel underneath. You can, if you're clever, stand above them and place a block on top of them, allowing you to stroll across.



EYES
Eyeballs are stupid; they just bounce up and down, down and up... and can easily be trapped with a block above or below, below or above them.



FACES
These ugly mugs defy all logic. They rotate around in dim circles three times and then decide to change direction completely illogically. It's best to trap them immediately – and be careful where you put the blocks.



WIZARDS
These guys materialise, shoot a fireball and then disappear. It's always best to pause for a few moments at the start of a screen just to see if any of these boys appear in painful places (i.e. the block you are standing on).

*Well, 99.99993701% complete, anyway...

WHAT A LOAD OF AM



▲ **SCREEN 2** This is the first screen you really have to think about. Race down, trap the ball, then build the platform across to the exit.



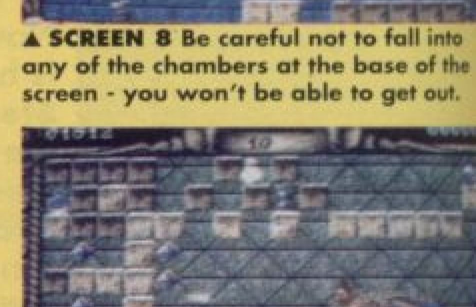
▲ **SCREEN 6** By now you need to have mastered the art of building your own ladder. The best way to do this is conjure a block, jump on it, conjure another next to it, jump on that and so on. Run left immediately, fall onto the hourglass, charge up into the alcove, and place a block right next to the ball.



▲ **SCREEN 7** Another race against time this. Don't bother to put a block left of the ball since it always rolls to the right. Go up the left, there's only one ghost there.

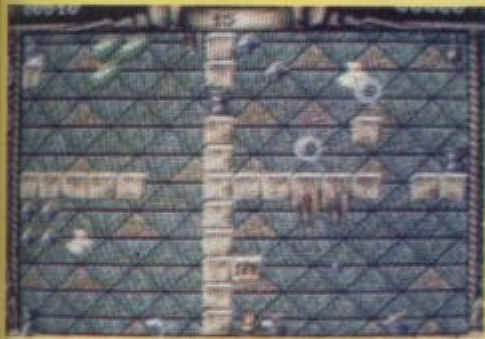


▲ **SCREEN 8** Be careful not to fall into any of the chambers at the base of the screen - you won't be able to get out.



▲ **SCREEN 10** A toughie. What you must not do is fall to the bottom of the screen. Leap across the top of the screen, get past the ball and race down, unblocking all the holes. Once at the bottom, block all the gaps and you're home and dry.

OF...MAZINGLY ROUND SPHERICAL OBJECTS!





▲ **SCREEN 15** (Above, before; below, after.) Race up to the top and trap the ball straightaway. Collect all the hourglasses. Build a platform from the ball to the top right hand chamber. Then release the ball and race into the bottom right chamber. Quickly build a basket to catch the ball.



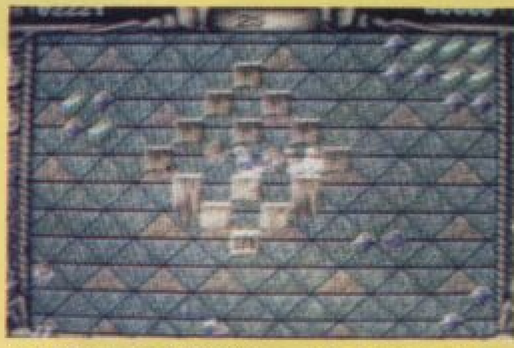
▲ **SCREEN 19** Lovely screen this. Don't bother to avoid all the bubbles, just sprint across the top, get the red potion, then race across the next floor and fall down. Get the energy potion and build a long platform. Simple.



▲ **SCREEN 20** Very difficult at first. The problem is how to get the key behind the dragon. The answer is you kill it. Collect both torches, build a short platform to its head, and just stand there, letting the sparkler smash it in the bonce. Just pray you don't run out of energy first.



▲ **SCREEN 24** The only real problem here is getting up to the ball before it falls into that gap next to it.



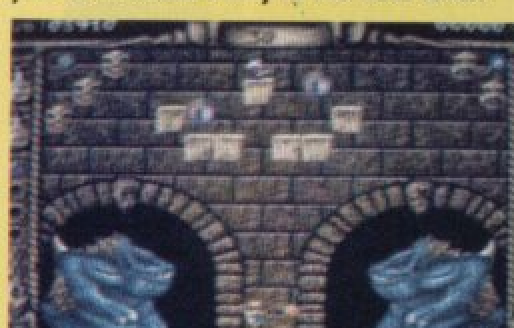
▲ **SCREEN 25** You've got to have a red potion here, or you'll never complete it.



▲ **SCREEN 26** Forsake all weedy ideas of self-preservation and simply zoom up and trap the ball.



▲ **SCREEN 29** Don't worry about completing this level - it's so easy even a shandy-drinker could do it. All you need to know is that there is a hidden symbol four blocks down from the top left hand corner. Just plant a block there and you're whisked away to the next level.



▲ **SCREEN 30** Aaarrrghhhh! This level is difficult. Start by blocking the eyes on both sides, then fall down on the right, onto the red key. If you fall onto the left, you're dead. Build the ladder back up to the top on the right and climb across the platform to get the blue key. Then fall down onto the purple key and climb up the ladder you built previously. Phew!



▲ **SCREEN 33** Unbelievable. You have to leap every single one of these poisons. If you touch one you might as well as quit.

ARTIFACTS



SMART POTION
These potions become invaluable on the later 'mean-mutha' levels. They vape every nasty on the screen instantaneously. Press '9' on the numeric keyboard to activate them (this is not made very clear in the instructions).



EXTRA ENERGY
Um... this one's a bit self-explanatory really.



SPARKLER
This gives you a temporary rotating orb, which kills all known nasties (except bubbles and sorcerers).



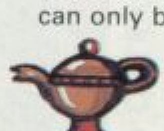
POISON
Avoid! Avoid! AVOID! These take away your ability to create blocks, so if you're at the bottom of the screen, or if the ball's about to fall into a trap, you're stuck! Avoid! (Have I made myself clear?)



FREEZE POTION
This freezes all moving nasties (except bubbles and wizards as per usual). You must be careful when using this as a frozen nasty can get in the way and thus hamper you quite considerably.



ANTI-GRAV
These come in two different varieties. The toggle variety can be used over and over again, switching between up and down, whereas some can only be used once.



LAMP
This, perplexingly enough, gives you immunity for a short period of time. You can tell when it's about to run out - you start to flicker in a most unnerving manner.



PARCHMENT
This gives you extra long (not high) and slower jumps.



TROPHY
The trophy teleports you instantly to a warp level. Warp levels are extra-specially hard levels, intended to tax the toughest players (i.e. us) . If you complete a warp you can leap-frog several levels as a bonus.



KEYS 'N' DOORS
The keys unlock the doors and, er... that's it.



WAND
If you come across a screen with a wand in it, you can forget the ball (alright!) and just head for the wand, or take a leisurely stroll around treasure land.

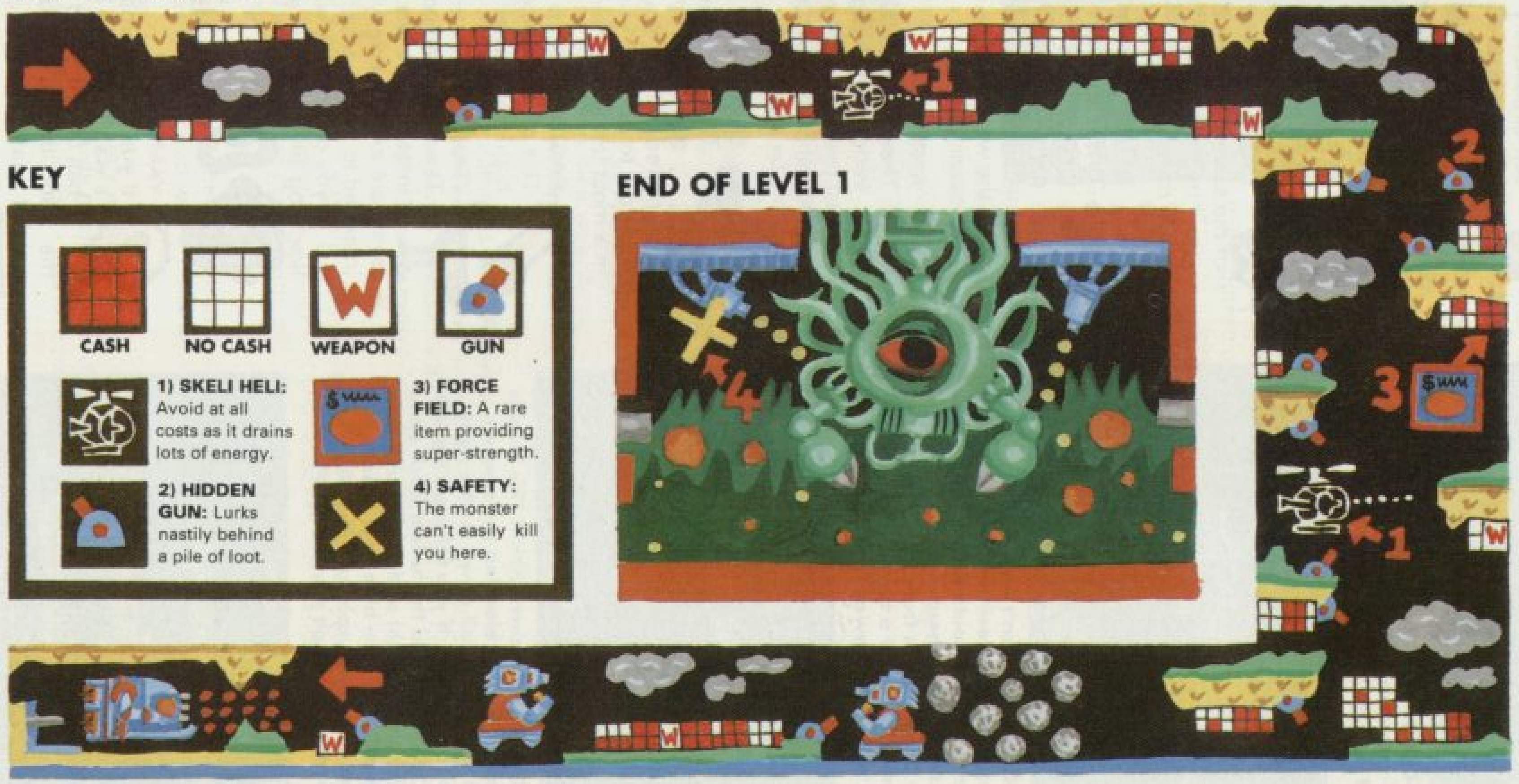


HOURGLASS
Collecting one of these prolongs the time-limit of the ball.

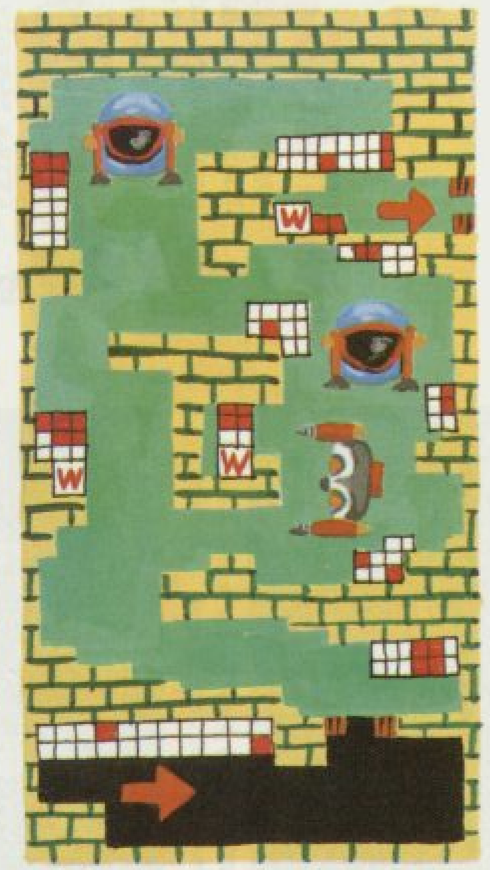
MR. HELI

ZERO MAP

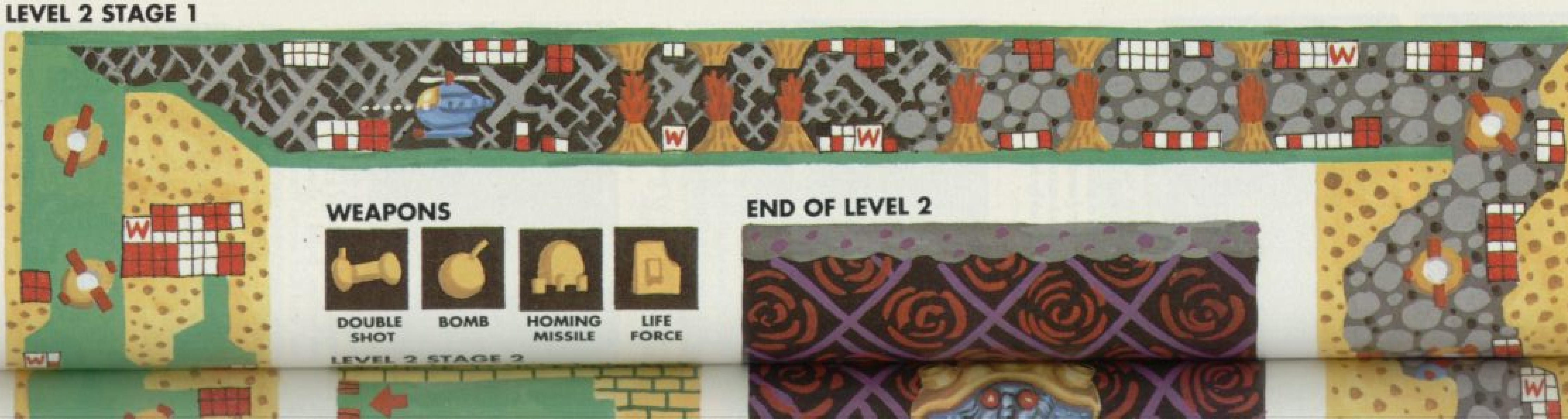
LEVEL 1 STAGE 1



LEVEL 1 STAGE 2



LEVEL 2 STAGE 1

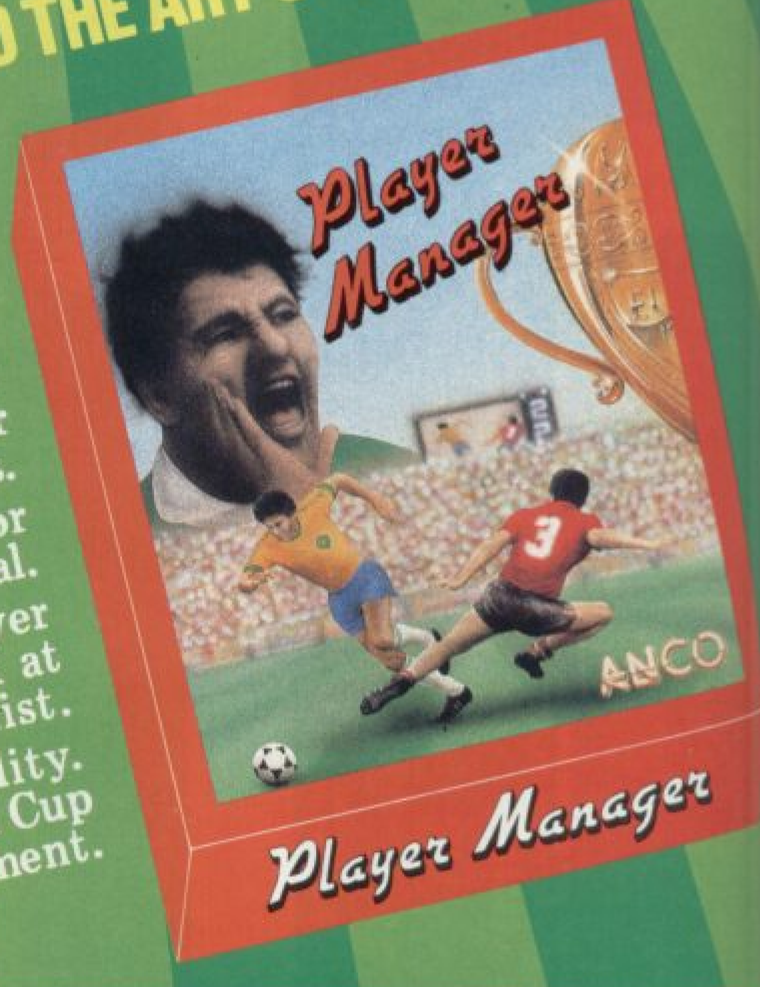




MAPPING: SEAN KELLY ILLUSTRATION: VICI MACDONALD

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TACTICS

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GET 'DEBRIEFED'

BY 'BINKY' BERKMANN

Helplessly stuck 'smack-bang' in the middle of a game? Step into *Marcus 'Binky' Berkmann's* Strategic Air Command Centre for a debriefing session, then. (No, not that kind of a 'debriefing' session – you perv.)

What ho, chaps. Marcus Berkmann here ('Binky' to my flying chums). Have you got a game with which you've persevered for ages, just can't seem to make any further progress in and are on the verge of giving up on it? You have? My word, that's a jolly bad show, don't you think? I certainly do! You should buck your ideas up a bit, old man – it's not exactly the spirit that won the Battle Of Britain. There we were, faced with the darned Bosch buzzing over the channel in their droves. We were totally outnumbered. But did we give up? No we bally well did not. We jolly well stuck to our guns. "Never in the field of human conflict," said Winston, "has so much been owed by so many to so few." Well I'm one of the few. And now I'm here to help you. Not only am I licensed to fly a Hurricane *or* a Spitfire, but I'm also licensed to dig you out of a sticky situation – which mainly involves answering your queries on ST, Amiga, PC and console games.

"How do I know the answers?" I hear you ask. Well, sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't, and when I don't I shall open the question to other Get Debriefed readers. Should you be able to untangle some other poor cove's gamesnag, you'll be awarded a singularly spiffing prize which (ahem) we haven't quite worked out yet.

So how do you get your letter printed? Here are some tips:
- Remember to write it.
- Didn't you put a stamp on it? Clot. Now you'll have to write it again.
- Enclose an enormous bribe, with all cheques made out to "Wing Commander Marcus 'Binky' Berkmann DFC (Offshore Account)".

And don't feel you have to ask about new games. Is there an elderly title that's been squiffing you for yonks? Let me know. Remember, that amazing "mystery" prize is up for grabs! Send all your stuff to **Get Debriefed By Binky Berkmann, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.**



IMPROVE YOUR HEX LIFE!

Erm... here's *Jon North* with the first of ZERO's monthly helping of hex, POKEs and hacks. Blimey!

Yes folks, you've waited long enough. Now the time has come when 16-bit owners too can experience the joy and bliss that has been known for years by the 8-bitters. Because, ZERO is the first magazine to give 16-bit players loads of POKEs and hacks every single month. No tips, cheats and maps in this section matey. Just lots and lots of hex.

FORGOTTEN WORLDS (Amiga)

To start you off, here's a routine for infinite energy in USG's *Forgotten Worlds*, painstakingly cracked by **Frostbyte** of Freestyle UK.

```
 10 REM Forgotten Worlds hack by
Frostbyte
 20 FOR F=327680 TO 327826 STEP 2
 30 READ A$:A=VAL("&H"+A$)
 40 POKEW F,A:POKEW (F+148),0:
NEXT F
 50 CALL 327680
 60 DATA
6100,4A,337C,2,1C,42A9,2C,237C,0,400,24,4BF9
 70 DATA
3,0,234D,28,4EAE,FE38,4CFA,FF,16,48F9,FF,6,A300
 80 DATA
2B7C,6,A300,C6,4EED,C,33FC,4E75,6,A9DA,4EF9,6
 90 DATA
A400,2C79,0,4,93C9,4EAE,FEDA,45FA,9C,2480,
43FA,86
 100 DATA
4EAE,FE9E,43FA,2E,4280,4281,41FA,14,4EAE,
FE44,43FA
 110 DATA
1E,45FA,6A,234A,E,4E75,7472,6163,6B64,
6973,6B2E
 120 DATA 6465,7669,6365
```

VOYAGER (Amiga)

Hawkeye, also from Freestyle UK, has been quietly beavering away in the still of a Morden night to present the world with a hackette for *Voyager*. Slap it into Amiga Basic (save it if you want) then RUN it with the *Voyager* disk in the drive. Have you noticed that all these hackers have strange names? Perhaps it was something to do with the Baby Boom in the 60's.

```
 10 REM Voyager hack by Hawkeye
 20 FOR F=459078 TO 459138 STEP 2
 30 READ A$:A=VAL("&H"+A$)
 40 POKEW F,A: NEXT F
 50 CALL 459108
 60 DATA
41FA,10,397C,4EF9,130,2948,132,4EEC,C,33FC,
4E71,2,1E4
 70 DATA
4EF8,800,2C78,4,207C,FE,88C0,43F9,7,0,303C,
145,12D8
 80 DATA 51C8,FFFC,4EF9,7,1A
```

HIGH STEEL (ST)

The first ST hack in the magazine! **Andy T.A.** (well at least he's got a fairly normal name), you can feel honoured, because this one's yours. Type this into Fast Basic and run it.

```
REM High Steel hack by Andy T.A.
RESERVE MC,512
F=MC: READ A
WHILE A<FFFF
   {F}&=A:F=F+2
READ A
WEND
DATA
601A,0,66,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,487A,52,
3F3C,9,4E41,3F3C,7,4E41
DATA
3F3C,1,42A7,3F3C,1,42A7,4267,487A,46,3F3C,
8,4E4E,41F9,0,66,317C
DATA
4E75,52,2F08,6100,10,41F9,4,0,33FC,4A79,
4,8898,2F08,3F3C,26,4E4E
DATA
5C8F,4E75,496E,7365,7274,2044,6973,6B00,
2863,2941,5441,0,2A,0,0
DATA 0,0,0,10000
```

Well that's all the space I've got this month. I'll be back next month with some more goodies to tap in, but in the meantime, if you've got any POKEs (ST, Amiga or PC) that you want to see printed on this page, send them to me (listings are fine but disks are better), **Jon North, Improve Your Hex Life, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.** Till next month...

IDIOT'S GUIDE

The most comprehensive guide to hacking in Basic? I doubt it, but here's how to use the POKEs printed up above.

AMIGA: Load the Amiga Extras disk you got with the machine until the Workbench screen appears. Select Amiga Basic, and once loaded, type the listing exactly as it appears here. Save it if you're going to want to use it again. Then put the original game disk in the drive, RUN the routine and it will load the game and run it with the POKEs firmly in place.

ATARI ST: Follow the instructions printed above for Amiga users but load Fast Basic instead (I doubt if Amiga Basic will work with your machine, somehow.)

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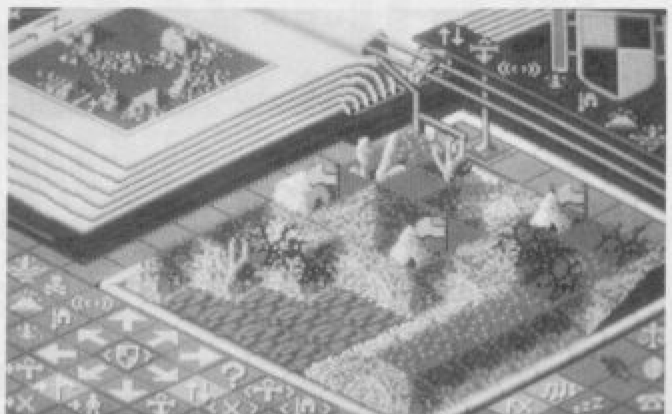
Come on down 'cos The Price Is Right! *Sean Kelly* takes a look at some of the ten quid hits on the 16-bits in the first of our regular budget sections.

POPULOUS PROMISED LANDS

Electronic Arts/£9.99

Typical! Just as we were all getting to grips with *Populous* and all its raising mountains, building castles, summoning floods and generally playing God stuff, Electronic Arts returns with *Populous Promised Lands*, or *God Sim Part II*, to bring us even more lands to fight over.

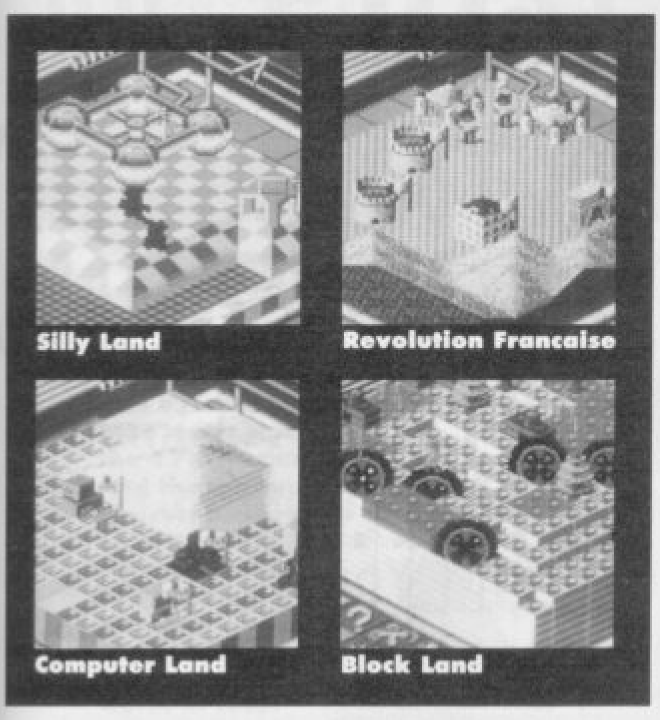
Populous Promised Lands is a data disk which contains five new lands populated by strange, tough opponents. There's Revolution Francaise, *(Ooo la la! Ed)* a land obviously under the influence of Bretons and the Arc de Triomphe. Silly Land, which seems to be overrun with blobby green space men. Wild West Land, which has cowboys and indians fighting it out on an American style plain. Computer Land where your population begin by living in ZX81's on a computer paper terrain, before progressing up to Cray Supercomputers. And finally Block Land, which bears a marked resemblance to the famous Lego Land.



Ride 'em pardner. Whoop! Er, except there aren't any horses in Wild West Land.

Obviously a lot of time and imagination has been spent designing and implementing the graphics for each land. They are really good to look at, and for the most part stunning in originality and implementation.

Once loaded though, you can get straight down to some serious conquering if you want. All the passwords which took you to the higher levels of *Populous* can also be applied in *Promised Lands*. So if you're a more experienced player, there's no having to work your way through each separate level before you can get onto the higher ones. You can get straight down to battle in the higher levels if you want. I thought I'd better play safe though (hem), so kicked off with Genesis, which took to me to the land of the Eiffel Tower, where my be-bereted and stripey shirted peasants took on the smartly dressed soldiers of the opposition, in an all out battle of garlic and french sticks.



Silly Land · **Revolution Francaise** · **Computer Land** · **Block Land**

The opposing deities in *Promised Lands* are a bit more difficult to beat than in the original *Populous*. Whereas in the original it's possible to create floods, swamps, volcanos and knights in the early stages, in *Promised Lands* your options are limited immediately. In Silly Land for example, my opposing deity spent all his (her?) time sticking volcanoes under any flat land which I created. So even in the early stages I was forced to use different and more complex strategies to wear down the opposition. My 'silly people' kept disapearing into thin air too, leaving just one castle and a walker every ten minutes or so. But whether or not these and other little glitches can be explained away as 'unusual features' I don't know.

Promised Lands may not enhance the actual gameplay of *Populous* to any great degree, but it does provide new and refreshing graphics for the *Populous* addict. At a mere ten pounds you can't go wrong.

●Available on ST/Amiga

OVERALL SCORE 80

POSTMAN PAT

Alternative Software/£9.99

Xenon II? Who needs it? Not me matey, not when I've got the chance to guide the trendiest postie ever as he delivers his parcels to the inhabitants of Greendale Village in *Postman Pat*, the latest budget game to hit the streets from Alternative Software.



Postman Pat and his black and white cat.

Probably aimed to appeal to a younger age group, the game begins as Pat starts his rounds in the post van yard. First stop is always the Post Office, where he collects his deliveries from Mrs. Goggins(!). Messages scroll across the top of the screen telling Pat where the parcels are to go and you must then guide Pat's wobbling van round the town to his destination.

The van is actually quite difficult to steer. But once you get the hang of it, you next have to keep you eyes peeled for the numerous oil slicks on the road which ruin your steering – as well as Mrs. Hubbard the mad cyclist who gets in your way as she cycles round town faster than Eddie Kidd. Unfortunately, driving the van over her doesn't kill her, she just pedals on regardless.

As you pass the house you are delivering to it will flash and you can deliver the parcel by hitting Fire as you bullet past the house at top speed – before careering into a wall. That's what I did most of the time anyway.

Occasionally, you get a message telling you that Farmer Giles' sheep have escaped, and Pat (who's obviously done a bit of moonlight shepherding on the side) then chunders along in his van to help round them up. There's a couple of bonus games to be played – Snap, Snakes And Ladders and Ludo – but a few more 'missions' might have added to the diversity of the game.



Postman Pat kerb crawls round Greendale delivering parcels to all and sundry.

Postman Pat is obviously aimed at the younger games player, but it could still provide a good laugh with a few friends and several lagers.

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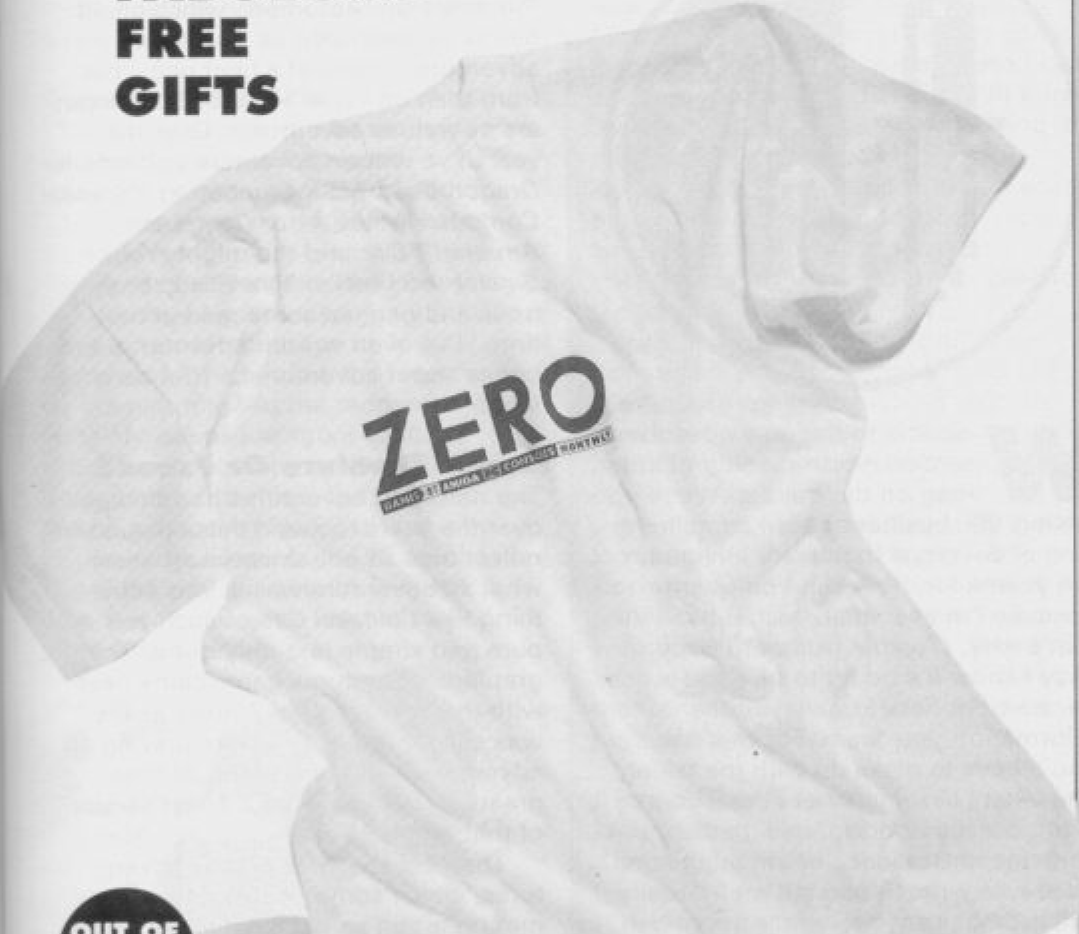
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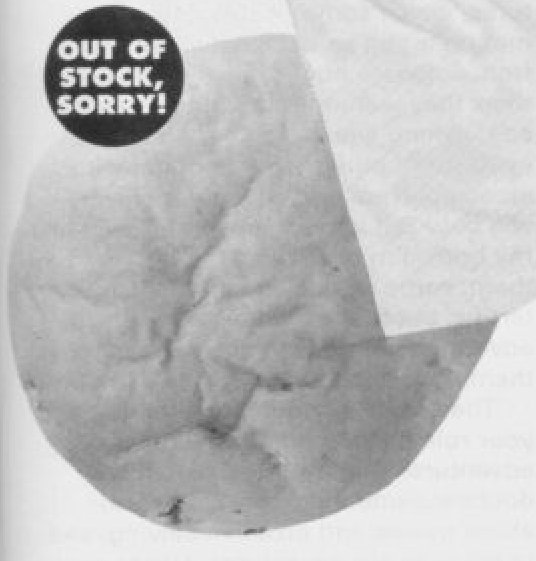
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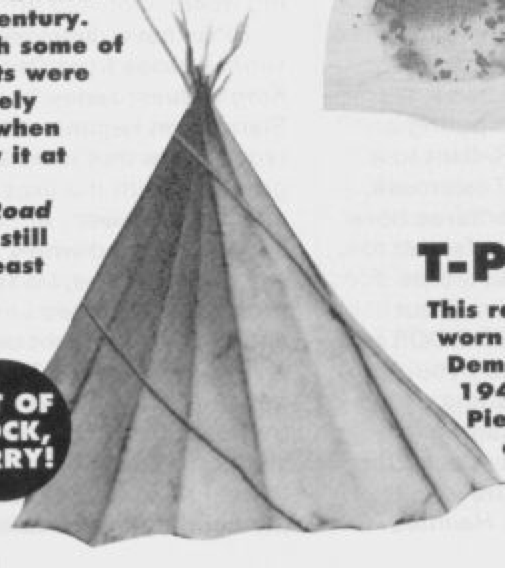
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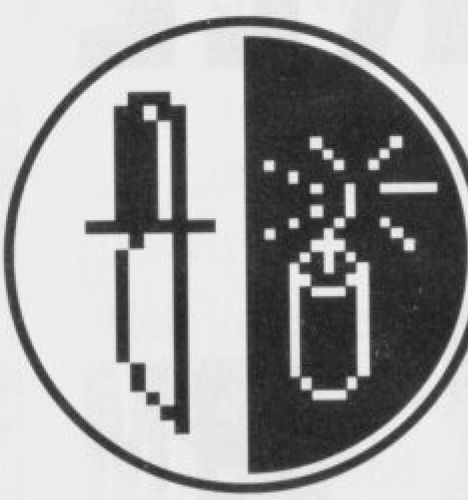
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ADVENTURES

That old hippie with the beard, *Mike Gerrard*, who happens to know rather a lot about adventures actually, brings you the best adventure column written by someone with a beard!??!





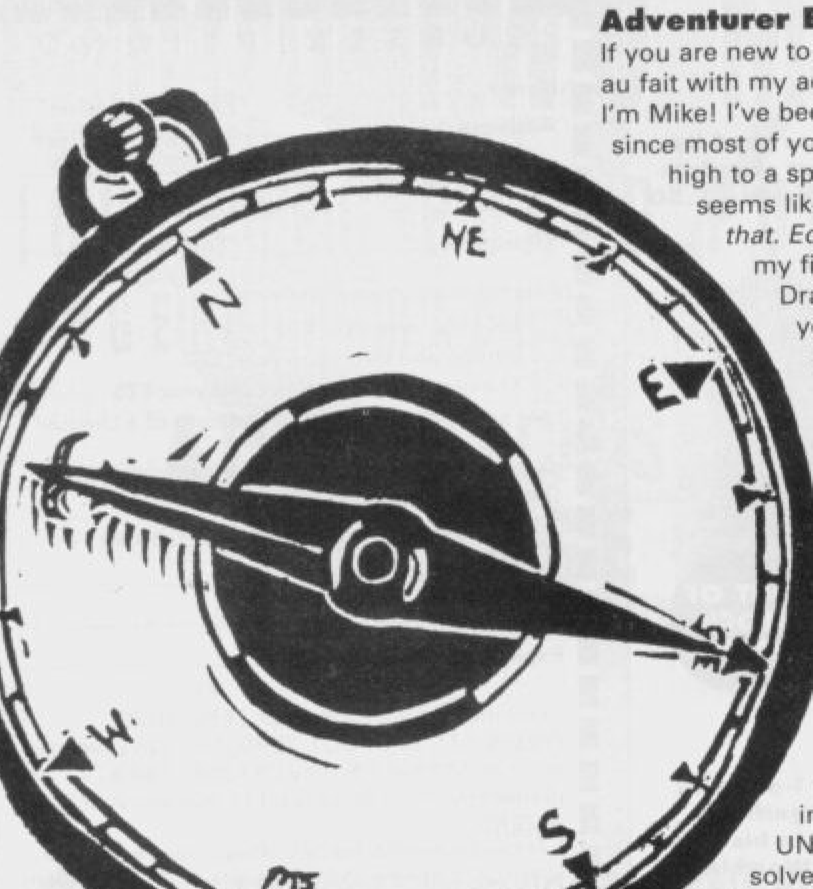
Welcome to the only adventure section worth reading of any mag on the market! We're talking *the* business as it'll contain the kind of coverage that every adventure fan yearns for. How can I be so sure? Because I'm absolutely incredible – that's why. *(Tell the truth. Ed)* Okay, okay I know it's going to be good because I'm here to give you the information *you* want. For this one you'll have to make do with me telling you what I like and what I think you want, but if you disagree with the contents, the balance or anything at all, please do write in and tell me – I really will listen, as anyone who's ever read any of my columns dealing with 8-bit adventures will already know.

So let's get on with the business of adventuring...

Adventurer Extraordinaire

If you are new to adventures or aren't au fait with my adventure columns – hi I'm Mike! I've been playing adventures since most of you were probably knee-high to a springbok. That's what it seems like, anyway. *(I'll second that. Ed.)* To be more truthful, my first machine was a Dragon, which those of you who also have beards will remember. It arrived on the scene not long after real dragons were banished from the earth, and compared to the ST or Amiga... well, it's like comparing a Robin Reliant to a Ferrari Testarossa.

Adventures have changed a fair bit too. Once upon a time if you could work out inputs like GO DOOR and UNLIGHT LAMP, you could solve anything going. Nowadays you need a degree in English Literature just to read the manuals. My first adventure was an awful Basic program called *Haunted House,* which came on a compilation tape. Dire as it was, I still squeezed some fun out of it. After that I played *Pimania* from Automata, which could hardly be described as a straight adventure – more of a bent one – but from then on I was hooked. On computers as well as adventures. Over the years I've written adventure columns for *Dragon User, MSX Computing, Personal Computer News, Your Computer, Amstrad PCW* and the mighty *Your Sinclair,* so I reckon I've killed some trolls and bagged some gold in my time. I've even written adventures and books about adventures... *(Get on with it. Ed)*



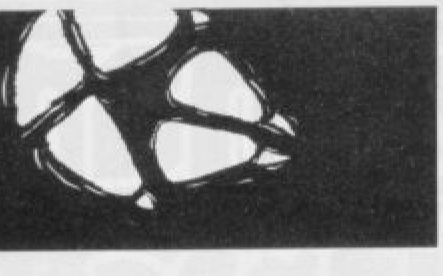
Real Adventure Or Pseud?

The nature of adventures has changed over the years too, and these pages will reflect that. At one time we *all* knew what an adventure was. It was something like *Colossal Cave,* which was a pure and simple text-only quest. The graphics adventures game came next with the arrival of *The Hobbit.* There was still no doubt you were playing an adventure – and one of the all-time greats. Just think what a 16-bit version of that might be like!

The next step was arcade adventures, which some people (including me) regarded as a marketing gimmick from software houses who didn't like to think they were missing out on sales somewhere along the line. Ah-ha!, they said – we'll publish a type of game that arcade players *and* adventure players will buy! But is it an adventure? Not in my book. I'm not saying I don't like them, some arcade adventures are terrific, but they're not what I term as adventures and I won't be writing about them if I can avoid it.

Then there's another type of game, your role-playing game or RPG. An adventure? Some purists would no doubt exclude them, but they're all about quests and problem-solving, and to me they are adventures. Mind you, I didn't like them until two great games came on the scene: the *Bard's Tale* and *Dungeon Master,* I very quickly changed my mind.

RPGs have developed through the *Ultima* series from Origins, and the *King's Quest* series from Sierra On-Line. Sierra then began publishing adventure-type games that were 90 per cent graphics, with the likes of *Police Quest* and *Space Quest* . At first, being an old stick in the mud who's always preferred words to pictures, I was a bit iffy about these. They seemed very slow to play and not well thought out. Not a patch on real adventures. That's still my personal opinion but they've improved tremendously in the last year and I've started to get quite a bit of fun from them. I must admit that trying to find the naughty bits in *Leisure-Suit Larry*

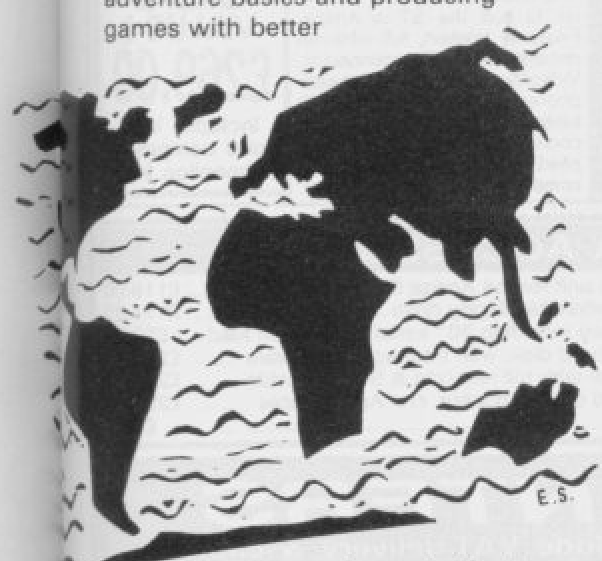


helped win me over!

So that certainly tells you what sort of person I am! (em!) But what kind of person are you, eh? I'd like to know, so write in and tell me.

Your Private Bits

This is the space that'll be entirely devoted to *your* thoughts on adventure games. I want info about your loves (keep it clean!) and hates on all adventuring subjects. Not just the types of adventures, but also the problems you encounter. Are 16-bit adventures doing justice to 16-bit machines? Which is the best machine for adventuring? At the moment it certainly seems like more exciting things are happening on the ST than on any other machine, but maybe you're a fierce Amiga/PC owner who vehemently disagrees?! And another thing: are we losing touch with the adventure basics and producing games with better



graphics and sound, simply because the machines these days can do that? Maybe even... and it's a question that never dies... you *still* prefer text-only adventures?

As well as airing your views, you can also write in and tell me where you're stuck and I'll do my best to help. If you want a personal reply, you must enclose a stamped addressed envelope, or an international reply coupon if you're writing from overseas. If you don't then I'll do my best to answer your question in the next available issue, but remember that because of production schedules you'll have to wait at least six weeks to see it in print. Even then, I can't guarantee I'll have room to use it.

That's some of the ground rules laid down – but if you want to revamp them and lay down your own, you know where I am. I don't believe in hiding behind silly pseudonyms like the White Wizard, the Black Dwarf, Pendragon, Gordo Gutbucket or any of that nonsense, which usually means the adventure section's written by whoever happens to be sober that month. This section will be written by you!

Illustrations By Emma Sutherland

MY PLAY LIST

THE JADE STONE

I'll be taking a slice out of the adventure slot each month to tell you what I've really been doing adventure-wise, ZERO -wise... er 16-bit-wise. Maybe I'm hooked on a massive game that'll be reviewed elsewhere, and I can tell you some things that didn't fit into the review; maybe I've been playing a mouldy oldie; perhaps visiting an adventure company and getting a sneak preview of something. Maybe I'll just have been scratching my bottom. Whatever it is, it's sure to be essential reading.

But do you ever get one of those days when you hanker for a good old-fashioned simple adventure? Not one where you have to read *War and Peace* before you load it up, not one where the box contains more goodies than a Christmas stocking and the screen's got more icons than the Vatican. Sometimes after *Millenium, Populous* and even the wondrous *Dungeon Master*, I like to sit back and play a straightforward game that reminds me why I took up adventuring in the first place.

Stone The Crows

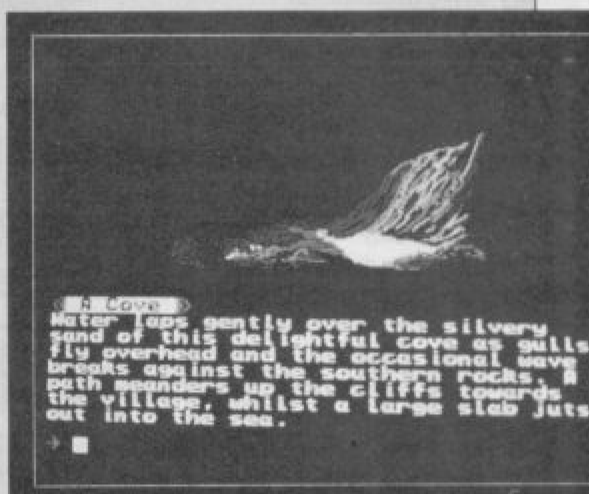
I found one this month in *The Jade Stone* by Linda Wright. Just the thing for a jaded palate and an empty wallet. A common complaint about 16-bit games is that they're too expensive, and we all cross our fingers when companies talk about releasing games at a budget price of £9.95. Well if that's budget, what's *The Jade Stone* at £8? It's a game you should think about buying, that's what!

Linda's had lots of adventure writing experience, having written several 8-bit games that Incentive thought good enough to publish. That's probably why *The Jade Stone* has most of the nifty features you'd expect from the best commercial releases like RAMSAVE and OOPS, a TEXT/GRAPHICS option, VOCAB and ALL commands, a choice between 40 and 80 column displays and so on. All done with *STAC*.

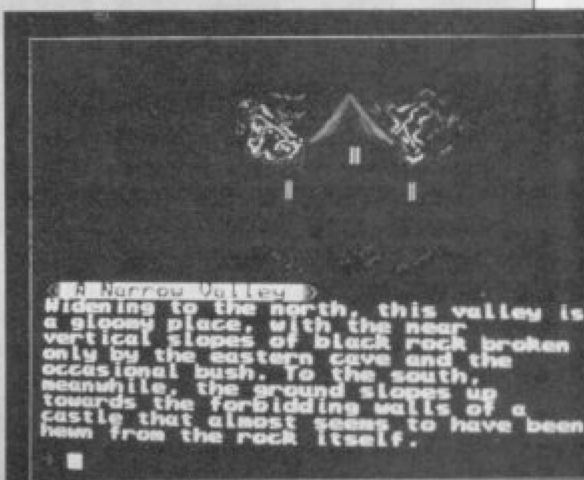
Groovy Graphics

A word about the graphics – and the word is 'great!' Lovely atmospheric pictures, with an artist's eye for the use of restrained colours. The quest is to find the Jade Stone, and of course use it to banish evil from the world, this time in the shape of Mallumo, a second-rate sorcerer. What makes the story different is that the main character is a woman, who must rescue her boyfriend from Mallumo's clutches. A tramp tells you that the Guardian of the Stone will only hand it over to someone who's loyal, kind, peaceful and intelligent. *(That rules you out. Ed)*

The game starts in and around the castle where you live with your dad, the King. In a small house nearby, a little boy is crying "I want Scruff!" Let's hope Scruff isn't the carcass you've just seen being hacked with an axe in a butcher's shop! But no, return the dog to its owner for a reward, and if you can manage to get the book out from under the wobbly table leg you might read that you must "POUR A CIRCLE OF S*** ON THE FLOOR AND SAY ***** **** ***". I just hope they mean 'salt'.



This is one of the earlier locations in the game. Got your trunks ready for a swim?



The Castle of Mallumo is the final location in the game. Interesting brick work there, don't you think?

The problems are nicely set. The plot builds nicely too, with different ways to solve some of the problems. There are several ways to finish, too, but only one gives you a full score: an incentive to play it over again. You'll like it. I did.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	*The Jade Stone*
PUBLISHER	Marlin Games
PRICE	£8.00
FORMAT	ST only.
ADDRESS	19 Briar Close, Nailsea, Bristol BS19 1QG



Now here's the bit that's written by the real adventure experts - you !

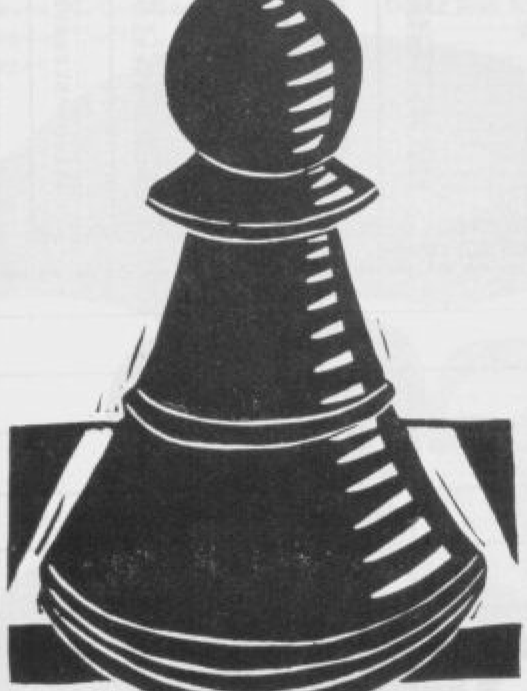
This is the spot in 'Adventures' where I'll deal with whatever *you've* been up to each month – concerning adventures, that is! Your private life is your own affair (though you can send me the photos for my private collection if you like).

If you've written an adventure and want it reviewed, send it in. If you've solved a trillion adventures and want to help people out with them (or you just want to brag about it) let me know. If you've discovered any nifty little routines for use in programs like *STAC,* well here's where you can tell the world about it.

Spent the last month putting together your own adventure fanzine, or playing a game for days on end? Think an adventure is under-rated, over-rated, bug-ridden or the greatest thing since the invention of knicker elastic? This is the place for you. I'll be telling you about *my* adventures on the adventure scene, so you tell me about yours. Okay?

As this is the first issue and no-one's had a chance to write in yet, I'm going to tell you this month what **John Barnsley** and **Sue Medley** have been up to – whether you like it or not! They'll be regular readers soon anyway, like the rest of the intelligent adventure playing public.

Sue Medley's run an adventure slot on Micronet for some time, and each year helps organize the Adventurers Convention down in Sutton, Surrey. John R. Barnsley set up and ran *Soothsayer* magazine for a year, and is a regular contributor to adventure fanzines with his clues, solutions and maps.The two of them have got together and the result is a bouncing baby called *SynTax.*



Thumbs up for *SynTax*

SynTax is a disk-based adventure magazine for ST users. The idea of disk-based magazines is an exciting one, as long as they use the disk to do what it does best – which isn't trying to emulate a regular magazine. Use lots of screen-shots, include complete programs, demos and even little programming routines, and you could be onto a winner. Just reproduce pages of text and you'll never emulate a magazine like ZERO – but will cost three times the price.

SynTax has made a good start with its first issue, though there's room for improvement.That may well come, as Sue tells me she's lined up a demo of *The Pawn* for issue two, which will also contain an interview with Al Lowe, creator of *Leisure Suit Larry.* Meanwhile, back at issue one, you get nine full solutions to games, including the one, the only, *Dungepn Master,* as well as hints to several more. There's a news and adverts section, a feature by John Barnsley on the history of Sierra-Line, and reviews of 12 adventures, though some like *Lancelot* and *Jinxter* are hardly brand new. There are graphics screens from some games, so you can see what you might be buying, but I'd like to see this aspect of the magazine improved as well as a section on *STAC,* including readers' routines.

What interested me about *SynTax* is that it's written in *STOS Basic,* showing that the program's more than just a games-writing utility. It's a well thought out program, and you can click back and forward through files, and get back to the main menu at any time, as well as print out anything you fancy – useful for the lengthy solutions.

SynTax will be out every other month, so issue two will be available by the time you read this. It costs £3.50 UK and Europe, £5.25 outside Europe by airmail, available from Sue Medley, 9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6LJ or John R. Barnsley, 32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford ST17 9EB. I like John's postcode!

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Right now it's your turn to send me your hints and tips, problems and any other juicy bits of info (keep those Readers' Wives photos coming!)! Whatever you've got to say on the subject of adventures say it to me, The Man With The Beard, Adventures, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

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Xenophobe	N/A	6.99	N/A	N/A	15.99	15.99
Xybots	6.99	6.99	6.99	10.50	12.99	12.99
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VISA

YIKES!

These pages are all yours. 'Cos Yikes! is the section where you get your chance to be funny/wacky/pithy/ dry or downright stupid. Seeing as this is Issue One, we haven't got any letters at all, so we're going to 'start the ball rolling' ourselves...



Publisher Teresa has afternoon tea with Bazza

CLAIMS TO FAME

Have you peed in the gents alongside Jeremy Beadle? Drunk too much and vomited in Richard Baker's front garden? Camped out in one of Claire Rayner's stockings (with Claire still in it)? Yeah yeah, we believe you. But we need photographic proof. Here are some of the ZERO team's claims to fame to give you an idea......





Macca McCandless has 'supper' with Roger



Dunc has breakfast with Thatch



Editor Gareth has 'elevenses' with Oz and the crew

Production Editor Jackie shares some baked beans with John Wayne



Designer Duncan Hemphill goes parachuting with the 'spook twins'



Deputy Ed Sean goes parachuting with Marilyn Monroe

It doesn't matter who you're with - 'Lesley Judd at a super-market opening ceremony' will do. So will 'In bed with Tom O'Connor and his mistress' (although you might get a bit more dosh by sending this one to *The News Of The World* - but send it to us anyway). Send all your photos to Yikes, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

THE YIKES! INTERVIEW



Every month, Yikes! interviews a 'famous person' on the telephone. We were thinking of doing one with Tommy Cooper, but as he died about four years ago we did one with Jeremy Beadle instead...

Right! Let's begin at the start. Where were you born?
Beadle: Hackney.
Yikes!: Mmmmm. Nice place. Um... Errrr...

At this point there's a little bit of panic in the ZERO offices as everyone tries to think of an 'interesting' question to ask...
Beadle: Hello, hello?
Yikes!: Can you hang on a minute please?
Beadle: Well no, not really, no. I'm very busy actually.
Yikes!: Oh, alright then. Um...at, um, school, were you a 'birrova' joker.
Beadle: Oh yes, very much so. Definitely. Oh, totally.
Yikes!: What kind of 'wizard japery' did you get up to?
Beadle: Er... the bicycle over the lamppost, the trousers up the school flagpost. All the normal stuff.
Yikes!: Yes, everyone does that. Erm.....

Another moment of mild panic as the ZERO staff try desperately to come up with the 'follow on question'....
Beadle: Hello? Are you still there?
Yikes!: Sorry, yes. Um, did you get in any trouble for playing these pranks: you know, did you get the cane or anything?
Beadle: Oh, bloody hell yes - at least once a week.
Yikes!: Really. What kind of area were you hit on? Bum? Hands? Knees? Where?
Beadle: It was on our hands or get sent to the head and get it on the arse.
Yikes!: Really?
Beadle: Yes! And our art master used to have a cupboard with six different canes, and they all had names.....
Yikes!: By jiminey!
Beadle: Yes. I can't remember what he used to call them. Um, there was one called Grand Harry.....

"I'm not an actor, I'm not a singer, I'm not a comedian."

"I'm not a magician, I'm a con-man."

"I've got the world's worst taste in music."

Yikes!: So you can remember then.
Beadle: Do you want an interview or not?
Yikes!: Sorry. Was this a normal school, or a drama school?
Beadle: (Getting all stroppy). Whaddya mean 'drama school'? I never went to drama school!!
Yikes!: Yikes! Sorry.
Beadle: It was a Secondary Modern school: it was a normal school...
Yikes!: In Hackney?
Beadle: No no no no no (still a bit stroppy), this was in South London.
Yikes!: Oh. What was your favourite school dinner?
Beadle: Cooorr! Bloody 'ell! (He thinks about it for a bit.) Gypsy tart!!
Yikes!: Sorry?
Beadle: Gypsy tart. It was a desert. We all used to go for Gypsy tart. And chips.
Yikes!: Sounds nice.

Suddenly one of Jeremy Beadle's other telephones goes off, and we get put on 'hold' for a bit.
Beadle: Sorry
Yikes!: That's okay. Um, when did you leave school?
Beadle: At sixteen. I was expelled actually.
Yikes!: They didn't find your 'jokes' very funny then?
Beadle: Apparently not, no.
Yikes!: So, um, what was your first job then?
Beadle: My very very first job was working as an insurance clerk (he whitters on for an aeon about the insurance clerk job)...
Yikes!: That sounds a bit boring. What was the most crap job you've ever had?
Beadle: I've had loads and loads and loads of jobs. I was a lavatory attendant once, it was wonderful: this was in Germany. I even had to pass a test. It was a written test, and I didn't speak a word of German, so God knows how I managed to get the job at all. I got the sack, though, for locking people in the toilets. I worked in a bakery once as well. I actually worked INSIDE the ovens.
Yikes!: You're lucky to be alive then. Er....

Another quick discussion ensues in the ZERO office: "What can we ask him now?" " Er. How about his tastes in music?" comes a rather obvious suggestion from the corner...
Beadle: Are you still there?
Yikes!: Sorry, the phone fell off the table. Um... er... what kind of music are you into?
Beadle: I've got the world's worst taste in music. I particularly like country music.
Yikes!: Oh dear. Do you like Tammy Wynnette?
Beadle: Yes, yes, I love Tammy Wynnette. I like Julio Inglesias as well.
Yikes!: Oh dear. How did you actually 'get into' television?
Beadle: Well, it was a matter of osmosis really.
Yikes!: Eh? You mean you passed through a semi-permeable membrane?
Beadle: No, it was drinking in the right bars. That's quite important in television. It's what television's all about. It's a question of 'who do you know' and 'who likes you' - what you've got to do is pick your enemies well. It's important to have enemies, though, because people (particularly British people) like taking sides. You just hope that the majority of people are going to take yours. Anyway, my TV career started by writing bits and bobs for the influential people I met in pubs. My first break as a television 'presenter' was after I'd written a series for Willie Rushton - who then couldn't do it - so the producer asked if I could step in instead. Which, of course, I did.
Yikes!: You were saying it's important to have enemies. Um, we were wondering if there's any truth in the tale that on a live recording of *Game For A Laugh*, you and Henry Kelly actually got involved in a fist fight and creamed each other in the chops in front of the studio audience?
Beadle: Where did you hear that? It's not true at all. Absolute rubbish.
Yikes!: So who are your enemies then?
Beadle: Ah....
Yikes!: Michael Grade? Leslie Crowther? Tarby? Roy Castle? Floella Benjamin? Rod, Jane and Freddy? ...Um, you're not going to tell us, are you?
Beadle. No.
Yikes!: Oh. Okay then. Bye. Click.

FRONT PAGE NEWS

Have you got a really useless 'local paper'? You know the kind of thing we mean, *The Penge Mirror* or the *Huddersfield Echo* - the kind of paper where the main story on page three is all about some elm trees being pruned (or something). Well, we think it's about time that these extremely interesting stories were given slightly more 'national' exposure. So, scan your local weekly (or daily), cut out the most yawnsomely tedious piece you can find, and send it to us - we'll do the rest. You'll win a splendiferous ZERO T-shirt (as will everyone else who gets something printed in Yikes!) and we'll send a ZERO 'Most Boring News Story In Great Britain This Month' Certificate to the newspaper. How thrilled it'll be! Here's one we found in *The Surrey Mirror*.


Farm theft

MACHINERY worth £500 was stolen from a Newchapel stud farm last week. The hole boring machine was taken from Churchill Stud Farm in West Park Road between Tuesday and Thursday.

Please mention this Newspaper

READERS WIVES (AND, ERM, PETS AND THINGS)

This is the *Fiesta* part of the mag - except it's not quite as 'rude': no Duck Billed Platypus shots here, matey. What we DO want, however, are snapshots of partners (or even friends or relatives) in an embarrassing pose. You know the kind of thing - the sort of shot where the 'photographee' didn't know a camera was about to go off and was in the middle of a particularly ridiculous facial expression. Or maybe you can 'borrow' someone's passport photo. You can even send in shots of pets (and these CAN be rude – after all, David Attenborough has footage of elephants mating: and that's not considered over the top). Oh, and send a bit of info with each picture, so we can do a little write-up.



No comment!



David Macca - would you buy a car off this man? A pretty grim passport pic by anybodys standards.

BLACK SHAPE

Hello. I'm a black shape (as you can see). I'm appealing to you lot to write to me - about anything, absolutely anything at all. The more letters I get, the bigger and more powerful I'll become. However, if I don't get much mail then I'll wither up and die - only *you* can save me. Because I'm in need of your correspondence, I'm going to start off a bit sort of 'grovelly'.... please write, dear kind reader. Um, that's enough boot-licking. Here's a sample (all my own work, as this is Issue One).

Dear Black Shape
I recently bought some cotton pyjamas emblazened with the cast of the cult ITV childrens series *Rainbow!* Bungle, Zippy, George, Geoffrey, Rod, Jane and Freddy. They are all there.

Luke 'Beatmaster' Kool
Brixton

Well done. Black Shape.

See how easy it is to 'get on board.' Write about anything - absolutely anything at all (*You've already said that. Ed*).

ASTRONOMY CORNER

By Professor Bernard Nebula

Bad news for NASA I'm afraid, and remember you read it here first, but things have gone awry with the dependable old space probe Voyager III. Shortly after photographing Neptune (and, I must add, what an absolutely super job it did), the radio signals became very weak and then, all of a sudden, fizzled out. NASA's worst fears have been confirmed by the computer enhanced pictures taken from the final radio transmission.... the solar system is surrounded by the sticky web of a monstrous 'space-spider.'

Taking a tip from ITN, I've dragged Heather Couper (the only female astronomer in the world) out of the closet. Here's what she had to say:

"Amazing, totally amazing, giant web, gigantic Space Spider, might be heading towards earth, we're all trifficly excited, I can't convey the atmosphere here Bernard, huge spider tremendously exciting stuff, must go now." *(Thank God for that. Ed).*



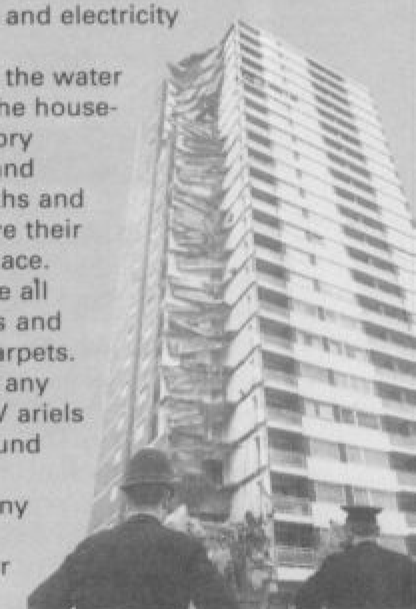
BUILDING TIPS

By Robert McAlpine Junior

Hello. My name's Robert McAlpine Junior and I'm going to be here every month to help you through the construction and demolition jungle: and let's face it - it is a jungle out there - a lot of builders are 'latter day cowboys'. Rest assured, though, that I'm not one of them, and in my first helpline I'm going to give you a few tips on how to remove an interior supporting wall....

PREPARATION

(1) Ensure all windows in the house are firmly closed.
(2) Turn off (at the mains) the gas, water and electricity supplies.
(3) Siphon the water out of all the household lavatory cysterns, and ensure baths and basins have their plugs in place.
(4) Remove all downstairs and upstairs carpets.
(5) Secure any exterior TV ariels to the ground with rope.
(6) Send any pets to kennels (or get the neighbours to look after them).



THE 'JOB' ITSELF

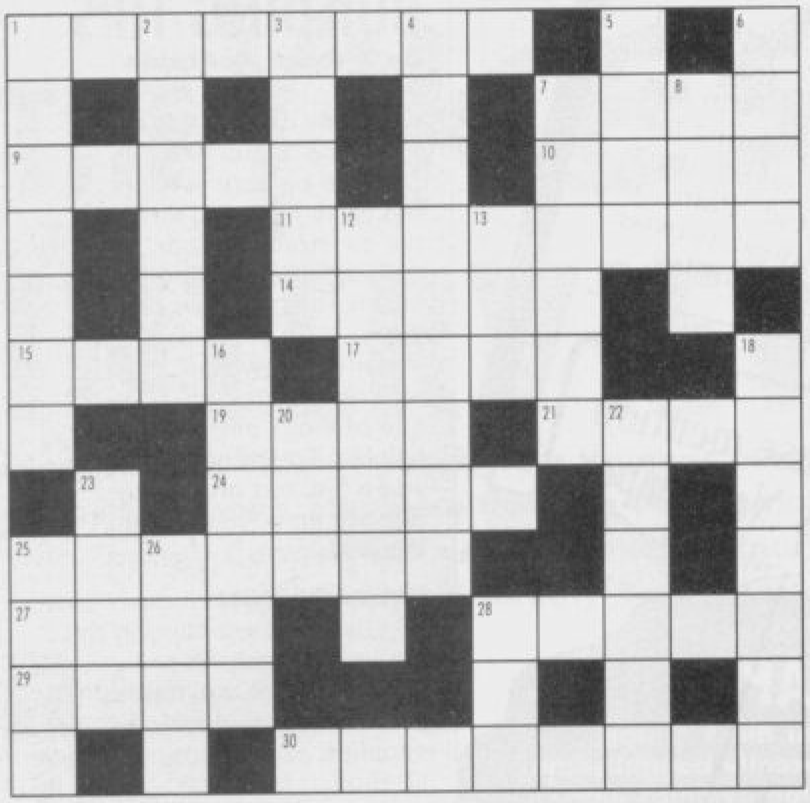
(1) Set up not one, but three scaffolded supporting joists (this gives a 66% margin for unit failure).
(2) Strip off all wallpaper extremely carefully (you may be able to re-use it).
(3) Soak the plaster in Sugar Water and chip it away. Take care not to damage the bricks beneath, as these are potentially re-usable as well.
(4) Once the plaster is off, get a sturdy screwdriver and begin scraping away the pointing between the bricks.

This last stage takes quite a bit of time, as you can imagine, so I'll continue next month. But as you can see, there's no reason at all why removing an interior supporting wall should be a messy or dangerous affair - if you do things the Robert McAlpine Junior way that is.

Any construction or demolition queries? Or maybe you've got some short cuts or tips? Write to McAlpine Junior - he'll get you sorted.

YIKES!

THE PRIZE CROSSWORD



Right when you've filled it in send it to Prize Crossword, Yikes!, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. First correct entry out of the hat gets a prize.

ACROSS

1 Vehicle for street celebrations (8)
7 Spilling into the pigswill (4)
9 Coating for a dish? (5)
10 Thoroughfare (4)
11 Charming (8)
14 To govern our periphery (5)
15 Possesses (4)
17 Akin (4)
19 Agreement in Warsaw, perhaps? (4)
21 John is always addressed this way (4)
24 Blasé (5)
25 Comprehend (7)
27 One time (4)
28 Washed, as in squeaky (5)
29 Honey wine (4)
30 First class (3,5)

DOWN

1 Isthmus (7)
2 Alibi in rhyme (6)
3 The perfect thing! (5)
4 Android (9)
5 Chunk of rock (4)
6 Type of sword (4)
7 Given a bad review? (6)
8 Just (4)
12 Chaos (7)
13 Edge (3)
16 Positioned within area (6)
18 Instructed (7)
20 Beer (3)
22 Scope (6)
23 Match wood (4)
25 Amphitheatre (4)
26 War wound, perhaps? (4)
28 Tracey Chapman's got a fast one (3)

GIVE OR TAKE

Want to get rid of that old Dragon that's been lurking under your bed for the last six months? No, not your Aunty Beryl! That old computer you'd like to sell. Got some software to swop? Looking for a Pen Pal? Or do you just want to tell the world what you've had for breakfast? Well, here's the place. Put an advert in Give Or Take - for FREE! All you've got to do is fill in the coupon below and send it to Give Or Take, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P IDE. But remember you cannot sell software, or your granny, and if you're operating a business you'll have to advertise in the classifieds

BOOK YOUR FREE AD HERE

If you'd like to advertise in Give Or Take, please write in BLOCK CAPITALS below and send the coupon to Give Or Take, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. Oh, and don't forget your address and phone number. We can't accept any software sales. And private advertisers will have to advertise in the Classifieds section.

Please include my advert (which is no more than 30 words) under the following heading:
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Don't use scissors to mutilate your mag, use a scalpel. Alternatively keep your mag intact by using a photocopy.

ZERO1

WARNING: ZERO cannot guarantee to place every ad received.

HOLD IT!

If you think "Oh, I can't be bothered to send anything at the moment, it'll never get printed!" then you're an idiot. Think about it for a picosecond: this is a first issue, which means we haven't yet got a backlog of mail - so you see, there's no better time to write. Scour your photo albums/local



papers/plumber's merchants...... NOW
Everyone who sends something in that gets printed will win themselves a rather brilliant ZERO T-shirt. So if you've got a letter for Black Spot or a tip for Robert McAlpine or anything else that you want to see in print, then send it to Yikes!, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.

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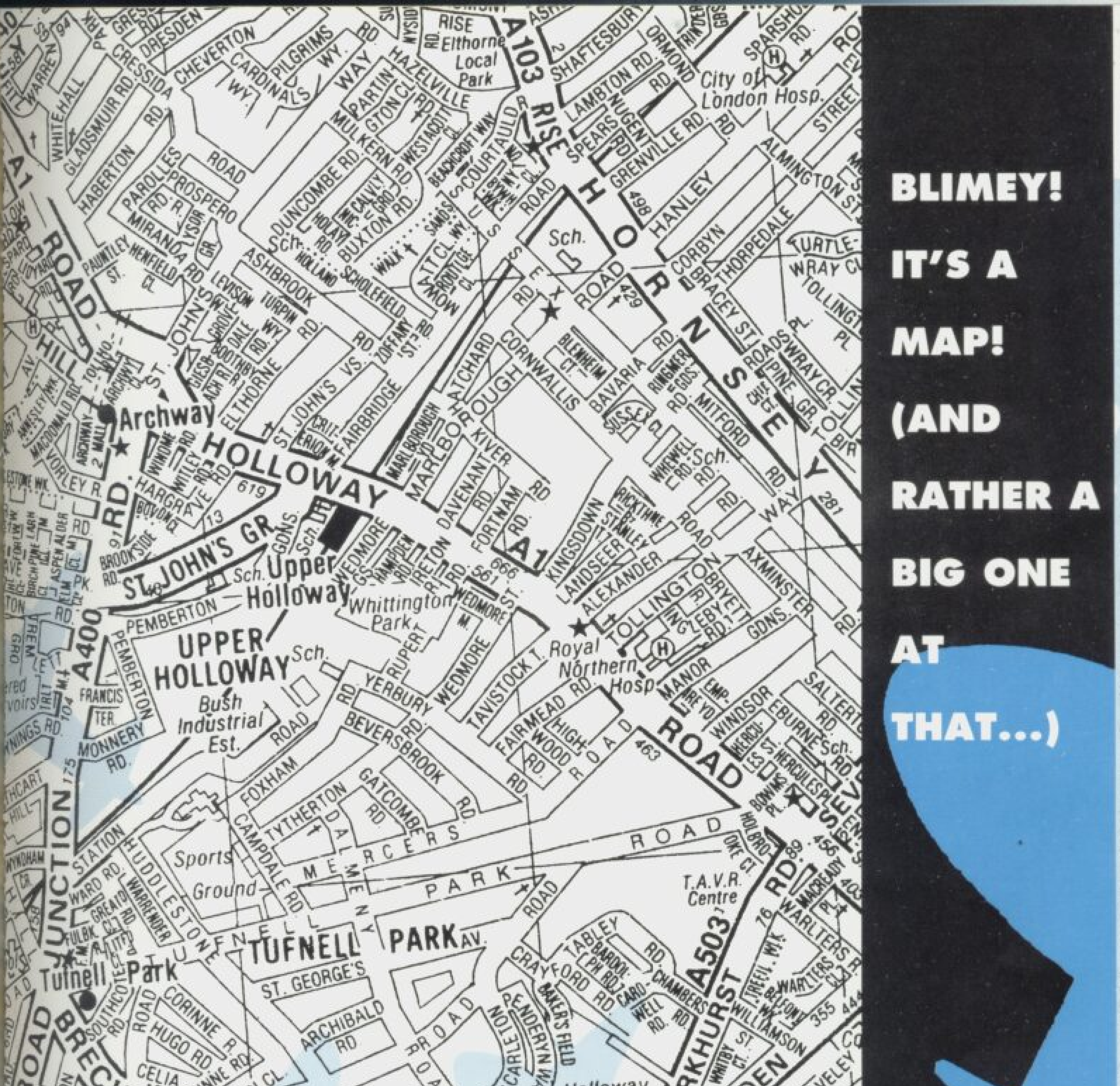
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BLIMEY!
IT'S A
MAP!
(AND
RATHER A
BIG ONE
AT
THAT...)
Turn page for instructions...

ZERO | Virgin MASTERTRONIC

THE ZERO/VIRGIN–MASTERTRONIC COMPETITION

IT'S A BLINKIN' STIFFY....



(and it comes in three parts)

WIN £50,000 WORTH OF PRIZES!!!



FIRST PRIZES

50 (count 'em, 50!!!) Sega Super Systems (Each with the Sega console, two control pads, a light-gun, 3-D glasses and a free 3-D game to get you started)...

50 (count 'em, 50!!!) Goodmans 'Yuppie Blaster' CD/radios (each with 16 track programmable memory, 5-band graphic equaliser, turbo bass boost and loads loads more)

SECOND PRIZES

25,000 quids worth (blimey!!!) of Virgin/ Mastertronic software i.e. about three squillion totally brilliant games.....

RUNNER-UP PRIZES

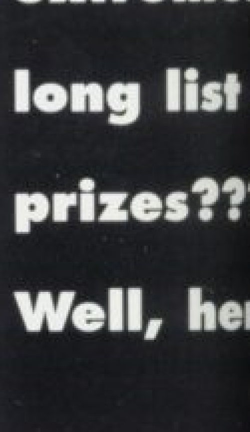
10,000 quids worth (crikey!!!) of money saving vouchers so you can save heaps of dosh when you go shopping.....

The total value of these fabulistic prizes is fifty blimmin' thousand 'QUID'!!! And that's rather a lot of money!!!

Turn over to see what you've got to do, but first... a word from our sponsors: This unbelievably ginormous throbboid of a competition is being brought to you by... (1) The awfully nice people at Virgin/Mastertronic (2) The awfully nice people at Goodmans (3) Us, the awfully nice people at ZERO (4) A three-toed sloth called Barry (*Number four's not very true actually. Ed*).

CARD NUMBER 1

You want a big competition ??? That's rather hard??? With an extremely long list of prizes??? Well, here



IT'S A STIFFY...

Yes the competition certainly is a stiffy. That means it's rather 'hard'. Mind you, with such fantabulous prizes worth such a gargantuan amount of dosh, you'd hardly expect us to make it easy, would you? No 'What's the day after Tuesday called?' type questions here matey (anyway, we were saving that one up for the tie-breaker).

ZERO

MASTERTRONIC

THE ZERO/VIRGIN-MASTERTRONIC COMPETITION

AND IT COMES IN THREE PARTS...

Yes, the competition comes in three parts. This is part one, (surprise, surprise) and parts two and three will be turning up in the next two issues. You'll have to collect all three competition 'cards' and using the map, answer all the questions set. Then you'll have to cross reference between them, come up with an answer (preferably the RIGHT answer)... finally send us the coupon you'll be getting (in issue three).

BUT WHAT DO YOU DO???

Aha! Now there's the rub. We've shown you the prizes. We've given you the map. We've explained about the compo 'cards'. But we haven't told you what to do. So here goes.

Each month we'll be giving you (via a cryptic clue) a starting point on the map. From there you'll be sent on a little jaunt, cross fields and dales (well okay then, roads and avenues) and told to note down certain destinations en route. You'll have to keep a note of all the destinations each month, as you'll need to refer to them all to complete the competition. Follow the clues below to find your first destination.

Karl Marx rises from the dead and points a porky finger towards a rather 'sausagey' road. Walk up this and 'do a right.' Take the next right, the next left and you should find yourself 'chez monsieur le facteur.' From here, head down the hill of rather tall gates and down the first road you come across to starboard. Very soon you'll come to the kind of road that geologists would like to live in. All you have to do is jot down the name of the very next road you come to (on the same side of the road you're on already).

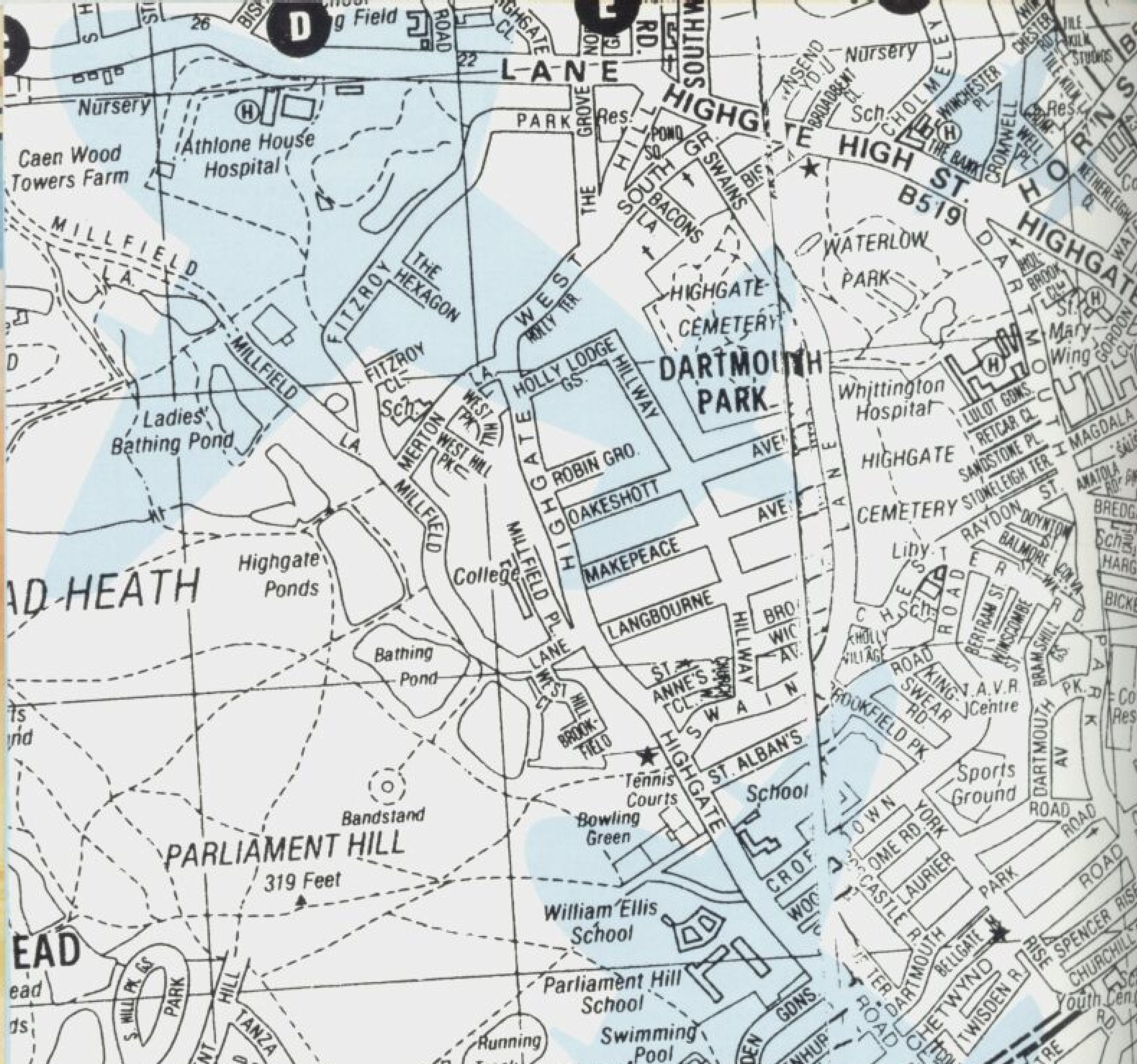
Next...

WHAT NEXT???

Next, turn left... erm, well actually we've almost run out of room. This is a bit like the end of most editions of *Blockbusters* - you know, the bit where 'Bob' Holness says "I'm afraid there's no time to go into the Gold Run right now (and he pauses as if you don't know exactly what he's about to say next) ...It'll be RIGHT at the beginning of the next show. Goodbye for now!"

What that means (in case you haven't caught on yet) is that we'll be telling you in next month's 'instalment' exactly where to wander next with the map on this card. So don't lose it. Erm... See you next month.

N





Commodore user

"...sound, playability and hookability to boot. One player it's great, two players it's unbeatable."

C+VG

